

# A SIMPLE ONE

## The Story of a Siamese Girlhood

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## THE CORNELL UNIVERSITY SOUTHEAST ASIA PROGRAM

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## FOREWORD

Autobiography is a literary form which has been favored only incidentally by the Siamese in their traditional written literature since its inception in the late 13th century. While Thai peasants have delighted to caricature the past and future life histories of their neighbors, particularly those of the opposite sex, in the impromptu versification of rural song fests which were the most popular expression of oral literature, the courtly poets whose epics, romantic fantasies, dramas, travel accounts, or religious writings made up the corpus of upper class Thai literature tended through the centuries to write impersonally. There were some exceptions, such as the wild and delightful Sunthorn Bhu of the early 19th century whose vivid character shows through the formalism of his proper verse; but these were so rare that autobiography or even an interest in writing about real personalities, whether in traditional forms or in the novel, can be said to be a modern literary phenomenon in Thailand.

It is thus little wonder that up to the present only three autobiographies of Thai have been made available to English readers, all of them originally written in that language. The latest life history of a Siamese to appear in English is The Treasured One: The Story of Rudivoravan, Princess of Siam, as told to Ruth Adams Knight (New York, 1957) in which a grandchild of King Mongkut tells of the restricted Bangkok palace life of aristocratic ladies, of her education in England, her return to the Siamese court, and of her own escape into the modern foreign world. In his autobiography, Brought Up in England (London, 1943), Prince Chula Chakrabongse, also a grandchild of King Mongkut, whose mother was Russian, and whose wife is English, deals with his international background and experience and writes of his reactions, chiefly from a distance, to people and events in Siam during the last years of the absolute monarchy and the first years of the constitutional regime after 1932. In My Boyhood in Siam (New York, 1938), Kumut Chandruang, writing as a student in an America burdened by depression and less concerned than it has become with carrying its other burdens abroad, provides an intimate and most readable account of upper class Thai family life during the first third of this century, illustrating good naturedly and without regret the changes brought about by Western influences in the traditional patterns of living among the educated elite in Thailand during this period.

Akin to Khun Kumut's story of his boyhood in its verve and charm is the autobiography of a modern young Siamese woman which the Cornell Southeast Asia Program is happy to present herewith. Miss Prajuab Tirabutana was born in a provincial town of northeastern Thailand only a few years before Kumut Chandruang completed the writing of his own story, and only a year or two before the revolution which left a king reigning but not ruling and which promised the country a democracy to be instituted from the top down. Miss Prajuab is thus a child of modern Thailand. She has not yet been abroad, but has lived her life among her own people, either in the Northeast or in Bangkok. Even in the nation's capital, she has had little direct contact with the cosmopolitan, urban subculture of the modern Siamese aristocratic or upper class groups, nor has she been closely associated with the self-sufficient "Little Americas" or colonies of other foreigners which now dot her land. Nevertheless, like most of her countrymen, she has hardly escaped the direct or indirect



influences of the West. The ambivalence of her reactions to these influences is not the least interesting aspect of this record of her life and thought, and should provide a parable for Westerners. She knows the West through omnivorous reading in Thai, English, and now beginning French; she has known Westerners well; and she has refused a position with the United States Information Service in Laos. Unlike the Thai who escape abroad or to an international cultural zone at home, Miss Prajuab remains in Thailand and retains many of her Siamese values and with these and her knowledge of Western culture she looks quizzically at what is going on around her. It is my impression that an increasing number of Thai view the world as she does. Not that Miss Prajuab's experience in modern Thailand or her reactions to it are necessarily typical or even representative; but as anyone who knows the country beyond Bangkok can testify, her vision, however modern it may be, is thoroughly Thai. And the Thai who live beyond Bangkok and must eventually meet the modern world, as Miss Prajuab has, are numbered in the millions.

In 1957 Miss Prajuab was running a small dress shop in the town of Ubol, an important provincial center near the eastern borders of Thailand with Cambodia to the south and Laos to the east. There she had met Mr. Clifford John Allen, who had come out from England to teach his language to a group of students who were studying under an international faculty in the Thailand UNESCO Fundamental Education Centre established there. With characteristic energy, Miss Prajuab had begun an intensive course with Mr. Allen to improve her English. When I came to Ubol in the autumn of 1957 to do field research in the region, I was impressed with the excellent writing being produced by some of Mr. Allen's students. He enthusiastically fell in with my suggestions that these young Siamese be encouraged to write autobiographies. Miss Prajuab began at once in October, 1957, and by May of the following year had completed the longest of several life histories which Mr. Allen kindly forwarded to me. It is this document which is here presented without any editorial changes whatsoever, the style of the work, its organization, the idioms, being entirely Miss Prajuab's own. Mr. Allen assures me that his work of correction on the original manuscript was very lightly done indeed as he did not wish to impair the thought or style of the original any more than he could help. Miss Prajuab has indicated her obligation to Mr. Allen for his encouragement. The Cornell Southeast Asia Program is obligated both to Mr. Allen and to Miss Prajuab for their generous cooperation in permitting this autobiography to be issued in this form. It is our hope that this Data Paper will find readers far beyond the limits of the small band of persons professionally interested in Thailand or Southeast Asia. Any reader will agree with us, I think, in seeing much "good of this story," both as a document and as literature. And they will join us in wishing its author well.

Lauriston Sharp, Director  
Southeast Asia Program

Cornell University  
Ithaca, New York  
October, 1958



## A SIMPLE ONE

My English is not good enough to write at all, but Mr. Clifford John Allen encouraged his students to write. When I had finished, nobody could make head or tail out of it if he did not correct the spelling and the grammars of what I had written. So if anybody sees any good of this story, please give it all to him.

Prajuab Tirabutana

Ubol, Thailand  
May, 1958







## A SIMPLE ONE

When I looked up I saw the branches of a pine tree with its green needle leaves and its triangular brown fruits spreaded above. I was being carried under a pine tree to go somewhere. This was my first memory of being in this world. I could not find out exactly what age that was. Some said three some said four years old when I saw that scene.

I was left in a strange place and with strange people. There were two children of my size in that house. I felt upset, it seemed I lacked something and missed somebody but I did not know who it was. Every thing was strange and unfamiliar to me around here. So I began to cry a lot. People around came to console me. It took a long time before I could stop, but my heart was still sullen all the while that I was there.

Those two girls were unfriendly to me. I was lonely indeed. One day I followed them for a walk in the evening, I suddenly saw the pine tree which I was carried under. It seemed I missed somebody and wanted to see that person very badly. So I followed the path under that pine tree, I looked forward, what a big field it was ! spread endlessly in front of me. But still I went on but not long because the servant who came to take care of us saw me going out of the way. She came to carry me back. I screamed and struggled. She did not know why I wanted to go out of the way, so she thought and told everybody that I was a very naughty girl.

In this house they called the man and woman there father and mother and they taught me to call them that too which I did not consent to at first because it did not seem right to me. But when I lived there long enough I called them father and mother automatically even though I did not like to.

One day there was another girl who came to live with us. She was bigger than me. She was talkative and friendly to me. After a few days that she had stayed with me she told me she was my older sister and when she heard me called the man and woman father and mother, she asked why I called them like that, he was our brother and the woman was his wife. So I stopped calling them father and mother.

As I have said those two girls were unfriendly to me, and now they were unfriendly to my sister too. One day one of the girls hit her on the head with the washing rag and she wanted to fight back, but the girl's mother held her and spanked her. She was very angry. At night we slept in the same bed. She whispered to me that the reason she was here was because our mother had gone away to some place temporarily and at our house there were just servants. When she came back she would take her back, but she could not bear this terrible place any more, so to-morrow early morning let's run away from here she said and then we embraced each other and went to sleep.

Next morning I thought we had woken up early but still there were some people who had woken up before us. She held my hand tightly and we went down from the house together. Nobody paid any attention to us, they thought that we might just go to play somewhere in the yard. We went out of the gate

stealthily. We went under the pine tree and across the field. And at the end of field was the road. It was quite a long way indeed but I was not tired because of the excitement. When we had gone on the road for a while she spoke for the first time on this flight and said that the next corner to the left was our house. And she had just finished saying this when we heard a bicycle's brake beside us. We looked up, it was our brother. My sister ran away at top speed. I could not go fast enough. He caught me quickly, held me with one arm and rode the bicycle back. I did not know what to do so I screamed at the top of my voice and struggled with all my might and main, but it was in vain.

From that time on he forced me to sleep in his bed with him, he was afraid that I would run away again. But really at that time if he had let me go by myself I could not go, because I could not remember the way at all.

Shortly after that one day we three girls were playing on the raised place (there was a roof on top, built for the tired travellers who could rest there) beside the gate. The cinema hall's ox-cart advertisement passed by. It was very noisy. Those two girls jumped up and down to the rhythm of the noisy music on the ox-cart. And I stood up to watch them pass on too. I might have stood in their way or something like that and one of them pushed me hard. I fell down on my back from the raised place which was not high, only about one and a half feet, but my left elbow hit a rock. It was a terrible pain. They heard my sharp cry and they ran down from the house to see what had happened. And after they had seen my arm, one of them carried me to a doctor. While the doctor was putting more pain into my elbow there came a woman, she rushed in and asked the doctor quickly in a trembling voice how badly injured my arm was. I did not even listen to what the doctor said. I looked up to see who it was. Oh dear ! Oh dear ! this was the person whom I had so longed for. When the nurse saw that I was going to struggle she held me tight. So the one thing left for me to do was to howl out "mother, mother mother..." repeating it all the time until the doctor had finished with my arm. I dashed from the nurse's arms to my mother's arms and clung tight to her chest. From that time on on that day I did not let anybody touch me. I was afraid they would part me from my mother. She took me to a house and there I saw my sister. I calmed down, so this was our home, our peaceful home.

Here I knew many people, my grandfather and grandmother, two more sisters, a brother-in-law and a brother. Every body was kind and friendly to me. And there was a number of cats too.

In our house here I was very happy. Everybody pleased me. There were many servants to do everything for me. I did not even eat or take a bath by myself. But the main and happiest thing was that, because I was so afraid of parting from mother when she went anywhere she had to take me along, if not I would cry all day long. I would dog her feet every where. And if I saw that brother was coming to see mother I would run away to hide quickly.

It seemed she went out quite often, mostly she went to the temples, so that I memorized some of the monk's verses which are in the Pali language. Mother was proud of my memory when her friends told me to recite those Pali verses I could do it well. Sometimes she went somewhere by boat, I could remember the nice green of the river. Sometimes she went by ox-cart when I remembered the green of the woods and I could get out of the cart to go to wade in the little sandy and cool stream. I remembered these events vaguely, and among these events I knew my mother's name by the other people calling her.



One event during this period which I remembered clearly was, one evening mother took me out and we walked on and on until we reached that pine tree. I knew now where we were going. I started to cry and stopped walking. She had to console me for a long time and promised that she would not leave me there. So I stopped crying but she had to carry me because I did not want to walk. I clung close to her and when she sat down to talk to the brother I had to sit on her lap all the time. Oh ! What were they talking about? It was so boring and I was so tired (from crying). I do not know when I had gone to sleep in her lap, but when I woke up in the middle of the night I found myself lying beside my brother. I almost screamed out, but on the other hand I remembered when my sister took me along and we ran away. I tip-toed out of bed, it rained hard, the bedroom door was locked loosely inside so I could unlock it easily. I ran out through the rain and first went to that pine tree and then followed the little path across the field. At the end of the field there were three roads, I could not remember which road led to the house. And it was dark too and I had to wait for the lightning now and then. I chose one hesitantly and went on a little bit, and then found out that I had chosen the wrong one." I stopped quickly and sobbed bitterly for a while. And there was someone holding a flash light walking along the road under the roof in front of the closed shops. It was a policeman on duty. He asked me why I had come out in the rain and very late at night like this and whose daughter I was. I could not answer the first question and answered the second question. It seemed he knew my mother well. He held my hand and we walked together to the house. In front of the house was a shop in which my older sister and brother-in-law sold things. And everybody slept in the house. The policeman knocked as hard as he could but nobody heard the knocking because of the rain. He knocked and knocked and waited for a long time. It was still silent inside. I started to cry at first softly and louder and louder later. I was cold and uncomfortable in my wet clothes. The policeman tried to console me and asked if I would go to stay at the police station for one night and to-morrow he would take me to my mother. I did not agree. Finally we heard someone moving inside and she opened the shop door. It was mother. She took me up quickly and pressed my head on her shoulder. I embraced her neck tightly but still sobbed heavily. She told the policeman that she had heard my sobbing in her dream and then she woke up suddenly and still heard me sobbing slightly from far away. She came down to see for sure. The police told her how he had seen me in the road. She thanked the policeman, closed the door and took me to the house, took off my wet clothes, wrapped me up in a thick blanket, took me into the bed and lay down beside me and caressed me and kept saying "Darling, stop sobbing, I won't leave you anymore, I won't leave you anymore" in a soothing tone until I went fast asleep.

I had lived like this (and dogged mother's foot everywhere) for quite a long time. All this time I could not remember that I had any connection with my sister (the one with whom I ran away). But lately I had noticed that she was dressed-up nicely in the morning and went somewhere and came back in the afternoon.

One morning grandmother called me. I went to her, she said today I would have a chance to dress up like my sister and would go along to school with her. I asked if mother would go with us also. She said, yes, mother would go along with me." So I let her dress me up. Mother took both of us to what people called school. I saw many girls there. Mother went to a woman and introduced me to her and told me to salute (to put your hands together between your chest and bend down your head to the hands) and said this was my

teacher. After talking a while with the teacher my mother began to leave. I clung to her closely. She took me to a seat, sat down with me and talked and talked and tried to make me understand that I could not follow mother till I grew up and that I would be a stupid girl and nobody would talk to me. But I did not listen at all. The idea that mother was going to leave me again haunted me all the time, it scared me very much. I did not let mother go. The teacher had to come and hold me back from my mother. I started to cry, mother went out quickly. I screamed and made as much fuss as I could. The teacher had no patience with me any longer. She spanked me slightly at first but after a while she got warmed up and spanked me harder and harder. But she could not stop me, the harder she spanked the louder I screamed. Finally she took me to the headmistress and said she could not bear me any more. The headmistress put me in a big cupboard where they kept teaching utensils and locked the lid. I cried and cried and messed up the things in there until I was so tired that I calmed down. The headmistress took me out and spoke gently to me: "Good girl, you must learn how to read and you'll have a lot of friends here. And we won't keep you here, in the afternoon you can go home to your mother". Oh dear! Why did they not tell me this at first. If I had known this before I would not have made such a fuss.

After I had gone to school for a few days, I liked it. There were many friends to play with, and my school life here came close to my sister. I passed four years in the primary school without remembering how I learned or what books we used to learn. All I remember of this period was pleasure, we played and played. And what happiness when we were going to school we went to say goodbye to grandmother or mother and they gave us some money and then we walked to school lingeringly. On the way my sister told me all kind of things. Sometimes it was such nonsense but it was pleasant to hear. And in the interval we went to wander by the riverside. Our school was near the river so we could go often. We knew where the red clay was. We made all kinds of things out of it, kitchen instruments, birds, dogs, cows and so on. Of course they were merely round or long in shape but we called them whatever we wanted. My sister did not like this clay business, she never joined me in those things. And the happiest thing that I can remember clearly was going home, saluting grandmother and lying down in her lap and she stroked my head gently and slowly and talked nicely to me. Sometimes she cleared up my ears and nose too, which I had never let anybody else touch except her soft gentle hand. By this time I gradually forgot my mother's love because I saw her rarely at home. And grandmother was so calm, so gentle, so sweet, so I threw all my love for mother on to her. But one thing that I was disappointed in about her was I wanted to embrace her and bury my face on her shoulder as I did with mother but she did not let me, she pushed me out and said I was not a baby anymore and could not do that.

But one event that was the real cause of my stopping to love mother was: one evening I followed her to a party for giving things to the monks of one of her relatives where she had gone to help doing those things. I sat by my mother and her relatives thought I would make a fuss and mother would have to go home quickly, so she gave me something to do, she gave me a tiny little knife which was very pretty I thought, and told me to peel some vegetables that did not need care in peeling. After I had finished the job I thought, well, this knife was so pretty that I wanted to have it. So I put the knife in my blouse pocket and by the time we went home I entirely forgot about it. When we arrived home I found out that mother just wanted to take me home, it was about time for me to go to bed she said. I embraced her as I used to do and begged to go back to the



party with her. Some hard thing hit her lower chest. She asked me what it was in my pocket. I took the knife out and showed it to her. The minute she saw the knife she put me down quickly and said with stern emphasis in her voice that this was stealing. She would not let anyone of her children do such a bad, bad thing. And she found a stick about one inch wide around there somewhere. I did not know that mother could be so cruel with me. She had never done any hurt to me before. She spanked me hard until the stick broke. She went to find another stick and found a bigger one and was going to hit me with that stick again. But my frightened screams called grandmother down from upstairs. She moved quickly to grab me from mother and scolded her, saying: "Are you mad? Are you going to kill this child?" My mother said that "I am going to make her remember all her life that stealing is a bad thing to do." Grandmother took me to bed and stayed with me because I could not stop sobbing. It was not because of the pain I got but it was because the way mother hit me, I thought she would not love me any more. When this thought came to me I sobbed out louder. So grandmother said in a soft voice that: "Mother means good to you, darling, don't you fret." And she wiped away my tears, stroked my head softly the way I liked and patted my back and kissed me tenderly, on my forehead. And then she left me alone.

After that for a few days while I was lying on grandmother's lap she stroked my head as usual. She began to teach me what a sin it was to steal, to lie, to kill and so on. And by that time the servant who took care of me started to threaten me with ghosts and spirits when I disobeyed her. So I was afraid of darkness, of going anywhere alone at night. Grandmother had noticed that, she did not say a word to the servant. But she told me that there were no spirits or ghosts in the world. Just stupid people believed in ghosts and spirits. And the way she said all this I thought it could melt even the strongest iron. Oh! Grandmother, I loved you so.

By this time I had noticed the difference between my sister and me. She could talk a lot more than I did. She was dear to grandfather and mother and I was the favorite to grandmother, because of the opposite reason. They both liked my sister because she talked and talked like a bird they said, and grandmother liked me because I did not talk much and I did not have the habit of begging for things. Because of this reason, my sister had a lot of play things and money, she could save a lot of money too. One time one of our brothers gave us both little savings banks, she got a blue one and I got a red one, it was made of iron and looked just like a big saving bank. We both were so thrilled to get them. And a long time later my brother dropped in to see us and asked to see us and asked to see our savings banks. My sister's saving bank was full of notes and coins but mine was full of calendar papers and little pretty gravels which I had picked and selected, just the pretty ones, on the way to school. My brother thought we both had a chance to have some money. So he blamed me a lot that I did not save any money and asked if from now on I could save money; I said 'no' and I could not tell the reason because I did not know how to say it. He was rather irritated and said if I could not save money he would take the savings bank back. I did not say a word, so he took it back. I was so sorry but I had never envied my sister. Grandmother's love was enough for me, she could have all the love of all the people in the world. I did not care.

I had finished the primary school. I could not remember how much I learnt at this school. The secondary school that we had to go to was farther

from the river than the old ones I did not like it very much but as long as all my friends went together it did not matter.

When we entered this public secondary school, we had to tell the new teacher our birthdays. None of us could tell her. The teacher told us to ask our parents when we went home, and tell her tomorrow. And because of this I just knew that my mother had ten children, five boys and five girls and I was the youngest one, and my sister was nineteen months older than I was. Grandmother was the one who told me all this, I could not remember at that time whether I could write or not but grandmother had to repeat my birthday to me many times and told me to say it after her until I could remember it and I could say it by myself.

The first year in this school we had to study the English languages. One day the teacher called me up to read English in front of the class. I could read it well. The teacher admired me a lot but when the other pupils could not read some words in the middle of the page, she told me to read it for them but I could not either. So she found that I could only say those words by heart but if she pointed to the same word in another place I could not read it. She took all her admiration back by the look of her eyes.

In the last term in my first year in this school grandfather died. All I remember was there were so many people in our house and I could not go near grandmother. She was busy doing something all the time and told the servant to take me away from her. One day, a few days after grandfather's death, I came home and saw grandmother and mother had shaved their heads and dressed in whites. It was so strange I felt uneasy. After grandfather's funeral, at night grandmother told me to come to sit in front of her. She held my head with her both hands and looked deep into my eyes for a while, stroked my hair and said: "Tomorrow when you come back from school you won't see mother and grandmother." She always called herself grandmother /jaaj/ with us, she had never called herself "I." I started to cry: "No, no, no tears darling, you must be brave. Grandmother will just go to stay in the temples. You can go to see grandmother now and then, and your sister will stay here with you, too, so it won't be so bad. She would play with you and you won't be lonely. Grandmother can't live with you for ever. Grandmother has to die some day, and that day won't be long. So you must make your heart used to it and be a good girl as you used to be when grandmother was with you". All these words called more tears.

Next morning I did not want to go to school so I made a lot of fuss with the servant who took care of me. Grandmother had to do everything for me and saw my sister and I off to school. All day long the thought that one day grandmother had to die haunted me. Oh! Why had a precious, gentle, sweet person like that to die? And then the tears ran down quickly and I was ready to quarrel and fight with anybody who was in my way.

When we went home that afternoon it seemed the house had no life at all, everything looked odd, unfamiliar and discontented. Next morning our big sister came to tell us that from now on we both had to take care of ourselves. "You are big enough to help yourselves now", she said.

From that time on we did not just help ourselves, my big sister and brother-in-law sold rice and therefore we had to help them make the paper bags



for rice too. At first it was fun, but sometimes we had to stay real late at night to do it. It was quite a job. We went to visit grandmother and mother a few times. That temple was at the far end of the town but after we went a few times we remembered the way well, and everytime I was allowed to go to visit them I begged and begged to stay with them, but they refused.

My sister was in the second year in school when I was in the first. After grandmother and mother went to stay in the temple, there was one event that amused me everytime when I think of it. The second year teacher was very cruel, she liked to punish the pupils very much and every time that my sister could not finish her home work, she would say to me while we were walking to school: "Let's not go to school, the teacher will spank me today because I could not finish my home work". And then she took me to wander around the suburbs of town, and we did that so often that I knew every place in our city and one day we passed by the field in front of our oldest brother I saw they were cutting the pine tree down. I was distressed because I loved that tree, I loved its leaves, its fruits and the way its branches spreaded. I stood motionless, stared at the falling tree with sad eyes, I would not have a chance to see you any more, dear friend. My sister urged and urged me to go on. It was no fun at all to look at such a tree, she said. One day we toured the west of town and went to see someone cutting coconut leaves under a house and we helped her to do it too. When we saw some pupils were walking in the street. We stood up, straightened out our Thai skirts and were ready to go home when we saw a woman walk in the gate which was quite far from under the house where we were. It was that monstrous teacher of my sister. I was too frightened and did not know what to do. She grabbed my arm and dragged me under a bush near there. We waited with drumming hearts which I was so afraid that that teacher would hear my heart beats, until that teacher went up the house and we were sure that she would not come down again. Good gracious! She did not see us. We tip-toed quietly out of her yard and ran home, which was quite a long way. We were quite late, our big sister asked us why we came home so late and she might have noticed my frightened face because she asked me what was the matter. Grandmother had told me not to lie, so I told the truth. She took both of us to mother. They consulted each other. Finally mother said: "We must separate these two rascals". And she chose my sister to stay with her because she was older and that temple was quite far from school. I had to come back to stay with my big sister.

The end of the first term of the second year in school something happened. One night I was holding a long stick when my niece (two years younger than me) pushed the other end of that stick. The other end knocked a few glasses down from the shelves and all were broken. Brother-in-law threw all the blame on me without asking a word. He said I was the naughtiest girl in the world and hit my hand. I could not bear such injustice. I waited till they did not pay attention to me. I went to the backyard without anybody seeing me. I climbed over the back fence to the dark lane. I did not know how late it was but it seemed everything was so quiet. At first the spirits which the servant had told me about came to my thought, I was so afraid. But on the other hand I remembered that grandmother said there were no spirits, I felt quite sure of myself. So I walked along in the desolate, dark street. When I reached the place where grandmother and mother lived in the temple, there was no light inside, every body had gone to sleep. I called grandmother many times before she could hear me, everyone woke up too. Grandmother came to open the

door for me. She was so surprised, I ran with tears to embrace her. She pushed me out and asked what was the matter and did I tell my sister when I came out here. I told her every thing. She sent someone to tell my big sister about me right away, and scolded me and said that what I did was completely wrong. But when I looked into her eyes I knew that she was not angry with me. Well, it did not matter what she said then. The person whom grandmother sent to the sister came back while I was in bed but I was not asleep yet. So I heard her tell grandmother that they both were very much frightened and worried, they went to look for me all round that area, but they did not think a bit that I would be brave enough to come out here. Most of the people at that time still were afraid of spirits so when they heard about this event they stared at me with surprise. Grandmother let me stay with her and the happiest thing was that there were not many beds there so she had to let me sleep in the same bed with her and how comfortable and happy it was to cuddle in her warm chest and go to sleep.

I liked this temple very much. There was no house nearby. It was so quiet and full of trees around. There was a swamp behind the temple and there were many big bushes too. We used to wander all over these places with very much pleasure. We lived very near to nature, and in the rainy season the water flooded this swamp. Mother took us along in a sampan to pick up water nuts. We started to know what people called those fishes, birds, snakes and some pretty insects. The other side of the temple there was a rice field, which was full of small sweet scented flower bushes, and they had small yellow fruit on them. We went through all this field to listen to the water flow out from the little dam that the farmers made, and when we listened from far away it seemed like someone was whispering into our ears, and we went round to look for those yellow fruits, picked them and nibbled them; they did not taste good but we ate them anyway just for fun.

While I was here I had dreamt twice that grandmother died. I woke up startled in the middle of the night and cried out loud with sorrow and fright and kept saying "Grandmother don't you die, don't go away from me". It took a long time for them to soothe me down.

And here I started to have self-confidence. Before whatever my sister had ordered me to do, right or wrong I obeyed her easily and willingly. And now if I did not agree or if she made her voice too superior, I did not obey. It irritated her a lot and she showed her irritation by knocking my head with her knuckles. She could do that a few times, after that I fought her back and found out that I was stronger than she was. So she dared not do it anymore. One day while we were walking on the way to school, she told me to carry the bag for her. I did not want to, so she called me a bad name which she copied out from a servant. I was so angry, I hit her with the umbrella I had in my hand. She looked frightened and did not want to fight back and it seemed that she was not angry with me that I hit her so hard. I was so penitent so I cried. She was stunned at first and then burst out laughing: "Oh ! How funny, it's me who should cry, not you". Later she told the people that I had hit her and was afraid that she would hit me back so I cried.

Now grandmother was strict in our manners, in eating, in walking, in talking, and to receive things from people. She always repeated that "The sound of your speech tells people what nation you are and your manner tells people what class you come from". But we never knew the word "Thank you" at that time because we were taught to show our thanks by our manner.



One thing that I liked to do very much in this period was to go to watch a monk go up to the bell tower at noon (about four o'clock), and when the dogs saw that they came to sit gathered together and every dog turned its face to the bell tower. When the monks rang the bell slowly, all the dogs - there were almost ten dogs - howled at once and they kept howling and howling until the monk stopped ringing the bell. And then all the monks would come out of their houses, go to church and when they all were present in the church, sat in order and then recited Buddha's preaching. I did not understand a word but I liked to go near by the church and listen to it. It sounded so peaceful. It made the restless heart calm down.

Grandmother taught us how to plant flowers and make a kitchen garden. In the evening we went to pick our flowers, arranged them and put them in front of Buddha's image. These flowers must not be smelt at all and must not be bruised, and before we went to bed, grandmother took us to sit in front of Buddha's image and recite and while we were reciting the scent of those flowers came to our noses. It was so pleasant.

One day the brother who gave us (I mean, gave my sister) the savings banks came to see mother and grandmother. It was the holiday of the last term in the second year in school. After he had finished talking with both of them he came out and asked if we would have liked to go to see father. This was the first time I had heard about father. Grandmother let us go. He took us to where he lived. It was a big house behind a shop, and very far away from where we lived. We went upstairs to see father. He had a loud voice and was lame for which I was afraid of him at first. But he had a good humour so I felt better later. He had talked to us and asked us about many things which I could not remember because for most of it my sister was the one who answered him, but when he talked to me he called me "little red head". Surely my hair was not red but it was very light brown when I was a child. When we were leaving he gave us both some money. After we came home (grandmother and mother had built a house in the temple compound) my sister teased and teased me about my red head, which irritated me so. I used to be sorry that my hair was not black like hers for which the people admired her a lot because it was real dark and shiny.

A few days later grandmother told me that father wanted me to stay with him. I refused at once, but grandmother kept saying the way I could not disobey and she was very old now and she would not be with me long and it would be for my own advantage if I stayed with father because he was rich and if I missed grandmother I could come to visit her anytime I wanted. She insisted and insisted when the brother came to get me. I had to part from her with tearful eyes.

This place was quite different from where I had been raised up before. There were tables and chairs to sit on when we ate and did home work. There were a family servant of the husband, wife and two children. There was a lovely garden with many pretty plants which I had never seen before. There was an automobile to ride out to the villages near the town after school time. And I could have more clothes. But the big difference was nobody here talked nicely, especially the sister, (She was the seventh and that brother was the eighth) It seemed to me she was very rude, all she could say was to order, to command somebody to do some thing for her and she had a very hot temper. Even though father had a good humour but he was rather strict. The only one

I liked was the brother because he let me follow him, to watch him play with his friends. He was "very" good at any kind of game. Mostly he won, he was one of a Basket Ball team of his school too. And sometimes if the game could have a girl join in, he would let me play with him. He had a big, tall, long eared dog which the French mechanic (who if the car had something wrong with it father would take the car to his garage) gave him. And I liked this dog very much because he was so clever. My brother liked to tell me about how he raised the dog up since the dog was a puppy and it was interesting at that time that I could listen about it again and again without getting tired. And at the end of the holiday he went to study in Bangkok and left the dog with me.

We went on a picnic every Sunday, actually it was not quite a picnic. Father bought a piece of land up the river, he had some one to take care of it and every Sunday we went up to that land which we called "garden" and planted some plants or sometimes cleared the weeds off. We went early by sanpan. The sanpan went slowly through the cool fresh morning breeze in the rising sunlight. Father told us to take deep breaths and told us "about how people did this and that in the old days or some times old tales which had some proverbs in them but they were very interesting. Around us was the green clear water which we could dip our hands in any time and far beyond was the pretty green trees with some white birds above them and the blue sky and the big puffy clouds in the back ground. It was so pleasant and peaceful to go through these scenes in the early morning. And before we reached our garden we could hear the sound of hitting a piece of clay by the villagers by the river. Every body in this village had the same livelihood, that was making clay pots. Sometimes we dropped in this village to buy some flower pots or sometimes to buy the sweet water which they produced out of the tarty palm's flowers. It tasted wonderfully. In this occasion I had chance to go to watch them make the different kind of pots too. And on the way back in late afternoon we would moor the sanpan on the and bank and went to swim. Sometimes I walked up or down the river to watch the little fishes dart back and forth in the shallow water, and if we had some rice left we would give it to them too and laughed at them when one grabbed the rice out of the other's mouth and darted away quickly. Sometimes the ninth sister was allowed by mother to come to visit me and stay a few days and she come to garden with us, we would make a net out of thin cloth and try to catch those small fishes. We hardly caught them because they moved so quickly. If we had ever caught any we just looked at them closely and laughed at their frightful movement and then let them go. Sometimes we dived in the shallow water which it was not necessary to dive into at all but we dived anyway to catch the oysters and then threw them out and watch them slided into "deep water. They tried "hard to teach me how to swim, but it was in vain. There were too many instructors, this one said you had to do like this the other one said you had to do like that, finally I did not know what to do." But one day I went down to the river with a friend without telling anybody, and made a wet balloon out of a Thai skirt by tying up one end of the wet skirt and spread it out and turned the open end into the water quickly, thus it would confine the air inside the skirt and then tied the other end. So I could swim with the supporting of that wet balloon. I swam out too far, and the wet balloon leaked because I did not tie it tight enough. When I realized that I tried to go to the shallow place as fast as I could, but it was not in time. The air was all out far from my destination." I sank down quickly with horror in my mind. I was so frightened and I did not know why in such time I was thinking about the chicken who did not believe its mother's warning not to go to swim so it drowned, the tale which father told me last week. It was a horrible feeling



when I thought that I was going to drown like that chicken, and grandmother and father weeping over my dead body. So I struggled and yell out for help. The effect was to choke me up. Oh, father I was so sorry that I came out here without telling you." I tried another yelling, so here came another choke. This time all those instructions for swimming came to me. I tried one of them, good heaven, I could come above the water and took a breath. When I reached the shallow place I practised swimming many times before I went home. Next Sunday they were all surprised that I could swim.

Our town was divided into four parts, the north part which did not mean the north but the up river part. The south part which meant the down river part. And the houses which were located near the river which we called the river bank part and the houses which were located far from the river and of course they were near by rice fields so we called them the field part. The house that I lived in before grandmother went to stay at the temple was in south part and the house that I lived in with father was in the north part. My oldest brother's house where I fled from it was in the field part. I had a rare chance to go to visit grandmother because everytime I asked for permission father would say, "No, it is too far for you to go." If I kept insisting he would say, "You are a woman, and a good woman should not go out much." If I still went on insisting he would lose his temper and broke out, "You want to be like your mother? and run around town and can't stay home for a minute. Listen, you are a woman, when you grow up your duty is keeping the house, if you have the habit of going out too much when you grow up you'll have no house to keep and run around like a street dog and have to sleep under other people's roofs." So if grandmother missed me she had to send my sister to take me to her and when we reached the stairs my sister would shout out, "Here comes the north part people, grandmother." And grandmother would say, "Yes, she lives there and is so happy that she forgets grandmother." Oh, it hurted my feelings so badly.

Yes, it would be quite pleasant to live with father if there was no seventh sister. She was so rough, so rude and had no manners at all. She always drove me mad. And I think it was because of her that made me have a violent temper afterwards. If she wanted me to do something she acted like she did to the servants which certainly I never obeyed so she gave me all kinds of names, naughty, obstinate, stubborn, red head, wild southerner girl and finally broken-arm girl.

I was in the third year at school now, and it was in this year that I remembered that I got good marks in the class. Even though I had never revised the lessons that the teachers had taught still I was almost always top at every examination. All my leisure was spent playing, all kinds of playing. Exercising and pretending to be anything, but mostly pretending to cook all kind of foods, used weeds and soil and called them whatever we wanted them to be, and then selling them. I had many neighbourhood friends so it was easy to go round and call them out to play in my back yard or another friend's backyard and mostly I was leader of them all.

My oldest sister-in-law had been a teacher before she married my oldest brother. And one day she sent someone to take me to see her. When I was there she said she got a method of how to test the cleverness of the children. And she would like to know whether I was a clever one or not. She began to ask me what did I eat this morning, yesterday and the day before yesterday which I could remember none. Really I never paid attention to what I had eaten so I

could not remember them at all. So she exclaimed that I was a desperately dull girl, her daughters could tell the foods that they had eaten for seven days back. I was so sorry that I was a dull girl. I came home with sunken heart and told father about it. He said, "Well, you better be a dull one but could pass the final examination every year than to be the bright ones and failed every other year like her children." I felt better then.

One day in the middle term a friend at school told me about ghosts and she said it was a true story. I asked her how she could know that it was a true story because my grandmother said there were no ghosts. She said she had read it from books. I was so curious because I thought if there was anything written in a book it should be true. So I borrowed her books one after another all about ghosts and spirits. I started to be afraid of ghosts again. It seemed the ghosts' business was to scare people, made the people afraid of them as much as they can. So everytime I walkedapass the darkness I always closed my eyes and ran. I feared that I would see a ghost with a red tongue one metre long stuck out from its mouth, or tearing its chest to make its heart, lungs and intestines fall out or with whiteabones and big red fiery eyes. And of course I always hurt myself by bumping into chairs, doors or falling down the stair case at night. Father asked what make me do such silly things. I told him the truth. He said those who wrote ghost story books did so because they wanted to earn their living. So they made up stories and sold them and just silly people would believe all those stories. If there were any ghost in the world, he had lived such a long time he would have seen one, but he had seen none in his whole life. And if I liked to read books why did not I read these. He pointed to the stacks of books on the shelves in his room. They were some old magazines and history books such as "Frederick the great" and Catherine the great Queen of Russia," and so on. I read through those magazines but the history books were too difficult for me at that time. At school I still borrowed books from friends, and they were glad to take their older sisters' or parentsd books for me to borrow because after I had finished the book I told them what I had read. One day the teacher came to inspect the cleanliness of the pupils' desks. She saw more than ten love stories and humorous stories books in my desk. She spanked me a dozen times and made me stand in front of the class for one hour. It was a really severe punishment. The friends who lent me the books cried and cried, half for me and half for all those books which the teacher said were very bad books and did not return them, she said she would burn them, and took them home with her. I was not sorry a bit in what the teacher blamed me and punished me, I did not even cry at the pain of the ruler striking hardly on my hand. ExceptaI felt deeply sorry that I lost my friends' books. A few days later a friend who lived near the teacher's house whispered to me that the teacher did not burn those books, she read them, she saw by her own eyes that the teacher really read what she called "bad books." From that time on I took the books to read them at home.

In the last term the war between us and Indochina broke out. All the pupils had to learn to sing marching song and marched and sang on every street in the burning sun to ask for the four provinces back from France in the East, and four provinces from England in the South. Almost at the end of the term the French plane came to drop bombs on us. The school closed before we had last examination. Grandmother sent somebody to take me back immediately. It was so nice to go to tour and play in those swamps and fields and to sleep happily being stroked on the head and the back by grandmother's



soft hand again. But she had a very hard time to straighten out my manner. I used to disobey my seventh sister until it became part of my behavior. So I was stubborn to everybody even mother, except grandmother, and copied the bad strong words from my seventh sister. Grandmother was stunned at first and then began to reform my behavior. She had to say again and again, "Oh, darling, you can't say that to people. You have to live among people, and every one has to help each other. If you say or do like that to people, they will hate you and grandmother will hate you too. And you can't live alone, can you?" I would do every thing that can keep grandmother's love for me.

Finally the school opened I had to come back to stay with father again. Every pupil passed to the fourth class without having the final examination. There was a change in the house. Father sold his car which was the same kind and same colour as the Governor's car. And we used to have a lot of fun riding in it, sometimes when we rode past the police station, the police saluted us which amused me very much when I saw that policeman's face when he found out that it was not the Governor's car. It was quite lonely without it.

And before I got five satangs everyday as pocket money for school which was plenty. I could save two or three satangs everyday and at that time we could use half a satang too. But in the fourth year father gave me ten satangs a day at which I was so glad on the first day that I dreamt about being a millionaire at the end of year. But the castles in the air had to fall down at lunch time on that day because ten satangs food was almost not enough to fill my stomach.

The last holiday the eighth brother came back from Bangkok. I had no chance to see him because I went back to be with grandmother and when he went to see grandmother I had gone out to play somewhere. Nobody told me that he came back on holiday but I know that he had come because he left many books at home, most of them were detective stories which I enjoyed very much. And I just knew that he was studying at the medical college.

The teacher who was the mistress in our class was very fond of me. One day she asked me to return an exercise book to a pupil in the fifth year class which was up stairs. I went up and saw that I did not want to disturb them so I passed by and looked at that student told her by the eyes that this book was hers. And then I placed the book down on the floor outside the room. As I was descending the stairs that teacher called me with a cross voice. I returned to her in the room. She asked me what I was doing. I did not like the way she made her voice and her acting. So I said, "Putting the book on the floor." She asked that I did so if it was because I wanted to give the book to some one in the room. I said yes. She said then I had to take the book and come in and ask for her permission. I did as she ordered but abruptly. She told me to say it again as she told me. Why, what was wrong with her, what did she eat today that made her be so cross? You did not say nicely yourself, why should I? I talked to myself. So I did it in my own way, which meant the same. She was mad and told me with a loud and sharp voice to say it again. I lost my patience. Why, I had done that because I meant good, I did not want to stir their concentration. I threw the book on the floor and walked away quickly. She was burst out, her face was red with anger. She screamed out hysterically and told her two pupils to run after and catch me. I did not let them touch me and came down to my classroom with rage. A few

minutes later a pupil came in our room and gave a note to our mistress. She read it and asked me what had happened. I told her. She said that teacher had asked her to spank me three times and she said she sympathized me but she had to spank me. I held out my hand, she just dropped the ruler on my hand slightly. It was terrible to be punished by the one you loved and thought that one loved you all the time. I could not bear it, I came back to the seat with the tears dropping down like rains. Packing up my things and went right home. Next day the news was spread all over the school, but fortunately all of the teachers hated that teacher because of her bad temper so they looked at me with sympathetic eyes, that soothed me down.

The end of the year the eighth brother came home with the books. I read them eagerly, some of them were very interesting. I ate supper hurriedly and returned to read the books and stayed up late at night. He had to wake up and said if I read the books too much my brain could not receive any of the knowledge. I should read them slowly and stopped when I had read them for quite a time, so the brain could rest. I knew what he said was true but I could not help myself when I found an interesting book.

In the fifth year class, there were two pupils who came from up country and they came to stay with my neighbour. We became close friends in a short time. There was not a door between our house and we wanted to chat with each other. So we were very good hand in climbing the fence. But if I went to ask father to go to play with my friends, he would say he would let me go if I had finished my home work. So I was admired by the teacher because I was the only one who never neglected my home work. But I think she gave it to the wrong person, the one who should get this admiration was my father.

Father bought a radi'o. He was interested in the news and Thai classical music. I was interested in the plays. It gave all of us fun. And he asked me to read the newspaper to him now and then. So I knew when the world war started and where they were fighting.

The end of year holiday my brother came home again with the books. Some were medical books. They were written in English. I could not read them but there were many pictures in them. They were curious pictures so I started to ask him about them. At first he thought I asked just for fun so he explained shortly. But I bestowed question after question to him earnestly, so he explained on and on and when he got tired, he wanted to stop but he saw the eagerness in my eyes, he could not stop. It was like this night after night till the holiday was over. We began to be close to each other.

The first term of the sixth year class started. We felt hard up. Father retired all the servants. The seventh sister had to be in charge in the kitchen. The pretty flowers began to wither. I could not bear to see them like that so I had to give them water from our well which was very deep. It hurt my hands badly. The ten satangs were not enough for lunch. So father said I had better take some food to eat at lunch. But the worst cook in the world was my sister. If it was not burnt it would be raw, too salty or too flat, too sour or too sweet or too hot. So I could not eat much then. And now her temper was more severe which made my appetite poorer. Sometimes I did not even take the food for lunch because I was ashamed of the appearance of the food she made. I began to get thinner and thinner. But the people thought it was because I played too much which might have been true too because I went to play and chat with my close friends at their homes, and came back late.



In the first term the teachers had a new system. They classified all the pupils. All the clever ones went to study in A class and B, and C, and D respectively. I felt very much improved in myself even though I was very sorry at first that I had to separate from my close friends. Before, when the teacher explained about something in the subject, which I understood at the first explanation, but there were many pupils who did not understand so the teacher had to go back and explain to them from the beginning again, which bored me very much so I began to be distracted and thought about something else. When the teacher began to teach the new lesson I did not realize because my mind still wandered round in the other thing. And even though I could and liked to read all kinds of books but not the books that I had to study at school. Because every time I took one up to read, I saw that it was the same thing which the teachers had taught. And the other books were new and more interesting to me so I chose the other books. So in fourth and fifth year class my marks were not good but not so bad. In the sixth year class the teacher could teach on and on without going back. I improved a lot and was always in the top group. There was a new teacher who came from Bangkok, she was not a Bangkokian, her parents lived some where near by our town. She was tall, taller than any teacher. She came to be our mistress. We all loved her after she taught us just a few times. The way she taught, showed that she loved teaching and intended to be a real good one. She did not teach just to earn her living like the other teachers. She did it slowly, plainly and respectfully. And the most fortunate thing was one of her subjects was the English language. I did not know how I could pass in English in former years because I was so confused. I could not make head or tail of it. But she was the one who straightened it out for me. I began to like the English language from that time on and got very good marks from it. I was very grateful to her.

One day a friend of my eighth brother came to ask about my brother's address. A few days later I received a letter from him. He said his friend had told him that the dust in our house was two inches thick. Oh, yes, it should be so if the seventh sister said I had to do the cleaning. Certainly I disobeyed. He started to teach me about cleanliness by mail. Beside this he wrote about bacteria, viruses and so on. The first holiday he came home and taught me how to wash and mend clothes, because I had never done it before, so I did it badly. He said these jobs were women's jobs, I should know how to do them well. I was curious in many, many things, when I asked the other people, they answered me shortly if I asked more, they would say I was a bore, asking for too many questions. He was the only one who could give me the very satisfactory answer and not getting tired in my questions easily. So I worshipped him and was proud of having him as my brother. And the way he told me to do the job did not hurt my feeling. So I did the jobs willingly and nicely.

After my brother left I went to play and chat with my close friends again. They told me about how to grow rice and the life up country and how each season they did certain things, how to go to pick mushroom in the forest and how to find them.

I had just a few clothes left now and when I asked father to have new ones. He said he had no money to buy. I felt bad because I had heard many people say that he was rich and he did not spend money lately because he was stingy, and so I believed as the other people said, which later I was sorry

that I had such thoughts. He started to sell our good dishes and pretty bowls and it distressed me so when he told me to take the fish out of our lovely square fish-bowl and put the fish into a common bottle and when I asked "why?", he spoke coldly that he would sell that bowl. He sold one thing after another until we had just a few things that we really needed left. There were two sacks of long copper coins, about four or five inches long, in a corner of his room. One day he took those sacks out and opened them. He looked at them for a long time as if he could not decide what to do and after he hesitated for quite a while he told my sister to go to call the copper merchant to come to see him. While the sister was away he told me to bring him a tin can, he chose some of those copper coins and put them in the tin can. I asked him what those coppers were he said shortly "the old Loatian money". When he had filled that tin can he put it away and sold all the rest to the copper merchant. It seemed he felt sad for many days. At that time I thought what a funny thing, when he sold that pretty pottery he did not feel a thing, when he sold those ugly stupid coppers he acted as if some one he loved had died.

In the middle of the second term my brother came home suddenly, I was so glad and surprised to see him sooner than I expected because it was not time for the holiday yet. The oldest brother came to see father, they talked together seriously. The next day brother told me that he had to go back to Bangkok that day. I was very disappointed. I asked him why he had to be in such a hurry. He did not answer. I always wondered what was the matter with him.

One day father came to watch me cleaning the floor, he said with a trembling voice that he had never thought that his own child would have to do such a job. I did know what to say to him, I should and I intended to say that, "It is alright, father, I can do it easily." But I was so tired, that I could not say any thing. My sister did not help me at all, that was too bad.

I had noticed that before there were many people who came to visit my father often but now there were none except our close relatives who came once in a while. I mentioned this to father, he said "Why, who would want to be friends with poor person. Because there was no friend to come to talk with him, so he had to talk with us, especially with me. He told me that he had divorced my mother when I was a few months old. The reason was she liked society too much, she went out all day long so she had no time to take care of the house and children, and she did that so often that mostly all of us had to grow up in grandmother's and servant's hands. She was too generous, she lent the money to every body who asked. If she had no money of her own she went round and borrowed it from other people for them. So he had to go round and follow her tracks to pay her debts. For the children's sake he decided to divorce her and gave her more property than he kept for himself. And all the time that he lived with her, grandmother was the one who kept the houses. "And your grandmother is the best house keeper I have ever seen," he said. (Oh! how proud I was.) Grandmother's father was Chinese and very clever, he was merchant, he could neither read nor write, but he could keep the books perfectly. He invented his own mark for each debtor and creditor. Grandmother's mother was a pure Thai. Grandfather was half Chinese, half Thai too, and his younger brother was the biggest and most brilliant merchant in town in father's period (before his retirement from trading). "But your



grandfather was a silly one," my father said. On his own side, he said his maternal grandmother came from Vientiane. The first king in the Chakri /Jakkree/ family won a battle in Laos and took all the rich people and their valuable things to Thailand. His grandmother was a child, daughter of one of those prisoners of war. That was why he felt so bad that he had to sell those Laotian money. The king settled them down at Korat. So she grew up in that town and married the son of the sheriff. But on his father's side he could not trace far because his father died when he was a year old, but somebody told him that his grandfather had some Chinese blood. And because his father died when he was so young he had to be raised up by his uncle-in-law who was Chinese.

This was the funny thing in my family. On my mother's side there was a lot of Chinese blood but they were bred in the Thai manner. They did not even talk Chinese. Their manners were properly and completely Thai. One custom of my mother's family that I liked very much was, my grandmother's father was buried far down the river. Every thirteenth of April, every relative took turns to be the host, giving the food to the monks at the grave. And every relative took a new one (their sons or daughters who had just grown up) along and went round to introduce them to all the relatives. We were all friendly to each other, after the monks had finished their lunch we had our lunch and after lunch we threw water at each other, sometimes we put some perfume in the water too. And when we were tired out in late afternoon we rowed the sanpan back to town.

On father's side, he had just a few drops of Chinese blood, but he was bred by Chinese so his manners were rather Chinese but the other funny thing was he could not talk Chinese.

In the last term the world war was serious. There were many Japanese soldiers in our town. They took the European war prisoners along to work for them too. We all took pity on them very much, they had just very short pants on and had to work hard in the burning sun. Their skins were burnt by the sun, red like a new born baby mouse's skin. Somebody said they had not enough to eat too. Some grown up people asked us children to give the food to them secretly. We had to do it secretly because the Japanese did not let us. If they saw that we gave anything to those war prisoners they would chase us with the sword on the end of their rifles, which we almost scared to death, so we had to be very careful. We had to go to hide under the bushes where they passed back and forth (carrying things), gave the food to them, which they had to eat hurriedly and hungrily out of the Japanese soldiers' sight. Or sometimes when they went to take a bath in the river. We acted as if we would go to learn how to swim, with a bucket full of bananas, cucumbers, boiled eggs and so on. We used the bucket as our support and swam near them and gave the food to them under the water. We found out later that most of them were Dutch and four Scots, we knew they were Scots because they wore the plaid skirts and walked round town after the war had finished, which amused us very much. Somebody said our town was not bombed in the war time because of these prisoners of war. Therefore we had to be grateful to them too. Before they left our town they built a monument at a corner of the Town Common in front of our school. There were some metal inscriptions on it too, which the people who knew English said was for the kindness of our town citizens. But when I know some English now, the inscriptions are all worn off, so I did not know what it said.

I could pass the final examination of the sixth year class all right. During the holiday my brother did not come home. I asked father what was the matter with him he said he did not know. I had heard that they dropped bombs on Bangkok badly which made me worry about him very much. But I was so wondering why my father did not look worried at all. He did not love our mother so he did not love us too I thought.

The schools were closed every where in the next year, I was so distressed, I missed the place, I missed my friends, and especially I missed my teacher. Now I had to stay at home all day so I had lots of time to read all the books we had at home. When I was through with them, I went to visit some of my friends and that beloved teacher. And now and then I borrowed some of their books, but mostly from my teacher which she had quite a lot of Thai literature in poem form.

At last the war was over, brother came home, he was dressed in a green uniform and had a carbine and a pistol with him. I was almost mad with joy, ran out to tell my neighbour friend about it, and came back immediately to listen to what he would say. He told father how he had traveled to India secretly where he practised to use the weapons and some course of the military subjects, how he spent time there and how he came back by plane and jumped out by parachute over Nongkai and lived there secretly until the war was over, and then came home gracefully. He was one of the Free Thai who worked against the Japanese soldiers. He stayed home for quite a long time until the next year's term began, which he had to go back to study in the Medical College again. Between that time he told and taught me all kinds of things and he was going to teach me how to fire the carbine and pistol he had with him also but father scolded him severely. He said it was not a woman's business to use weapons.

The next year's term began, I asked father to continue to study like my sister. Mother had sent her to study the seventh year class in Bangkok. Father said he had no money, the money that he could earn now was almost not enough to support my brother through the college. My heart just broke, I cried and cried and cried, the world, the life, or whatever people called it was very bitter then. And it was more and more bitter when the parents of my neighbour friend had to beg, to entreat their sons to go on and study, and promised to give them this and that or whatever they wanted if they just went on to study. A few months later father said he would let me go to study in Bangkok too, but not the seventh year class, I had to study something that could help with the living expenses but had not to use much money and much time.

I was sent to Bangkok. I had read a lot about it so it did not take me long to be familiar with it. I stayed in the same family where my sister lived. To save the time she study the seventh and the eighth year class in the same time, which she had to study the books very hard. She could not go on long, her health broke down. She always had headaches. And by this time mother could not afford her learning expenses any longer. So she had to stop and had to learn something like I was going to do. She chose dress making and told me I should learn hair dressing so we could do the job together in the same shop. All right, whatever anybody said it would be all right for me.



At first brother came to accompany me and showed me the places I should know. But later he said he had to study hard, he had no time to do that anymore and told me to help myself, and he said I should be able to tour round Bangkok and eat alone in restaurants too. That was very unconventional for a Thai woman to do. But if brother said I could do, why could not I?

We both came home and had a shop in front of father's house. My sister could support mother and I could cover all the expenses in father's house. My sister had a very hard time with our seventh sister. She was spoiled by grandfather and mother, she spoke always too much and was ready to grumble anytime and was very intolerant, so they both had a hard time with each other.

Grandmother died shortly after we came home. She went easily and quickly by fainting at five o'clock in the early morning. When the seventh sister tortured me I used to go to grandmother and cry it out with her. She always said I was grown up now and had to be patient and try hard to hold in my tears because it would show my weakness. All the people had to suffer from one thing or another, she added. So the first day and the second day that she had gone, I tried very hard not to let the tears come out. "I must be brave, I must be brave." I kept saying to myself, But oh, it was terrible when the tears dropped inside, grandmother. I could not bear such feeling anymore. So the tears burst out like a broken dam on the third day.

Mother sold one of her properties, so my sister had not to spend much of her money. But father had to support my brother with all of his money, so I had to take care of the expense in the house. I could spare a little for books. I persuaded my sister to buy books by explaining the usefulness of them and told her some stories from the books I had read. She did buy them one after another at my suggestion without reading any of them. I was the one who read them and told the stories and criticized which part was good and impressed, which part was bad or unreasonable to her. It was an amusing scene when she chatted to her friends she would say, "Oh, have you read the so and so book yet?" Naturally her friends would say no, then she would tell her friends about those books she had mentioned with an important air as if she had read the books by herself. I had to cover my mouth tightly with my hand, I was afraid that I would burst out laughing.

Now I came to the top point of my reading. Before I could pick up any book and read on and on, but now if I picked up a book, read it for a few pages I would know how it would end. And I could not read such books. So before I read I had to see who was the author first and finally there were just a few authors left for me to read. So I started to read the books that were translated from English and French and I found out that they were quite interesting, I told this to my brother, he said if I could read them in those languages it would be far more interesting.

Father started to talk about politics with me. At first I just listened quietly but later when he said something which I thought it was not right I began to argue with him. Sometimes it was so serious that it made him angry with me for many days. One thing that later events proved that I was right was, he was so pleased that America, England, and Russia won the war. He kept talking and talking about it, and said from now on there would be peace forever. So I said, "Who knows father, those three won and got the same things and how can they divide what they have got fairly? If one

thought it was not fair they would begin to hate one another and finally they might fight each other again.<sup>f</sup> When I said those words I was thinking about how when I was a child mother gave us a piece of candy and told us to divide it among ourselves.<sup>s</sup> If my sister was the one who divided it I would say, no, it was not fair and if I was the one who divided it my sister would say the same, and then we began to dispute and quarrel and sometimes if the candy was a big piece, we ended up fighting. Father said no they would not do that, they were civilized and clever people, they were not children and then he praised that French mechanic and that Dutch captain<sup>s</sup> who came to train the police in our town since he was young as examples.

The oldest sister owned a bus and sometimes the bus had to go to the villages where there was no road to lead in to them. She knew that I loved to see different places so she invited me to go often. One time mother went into a deep village which was surrounded by mountains far from our town. She was sick of malaria, the oldest sister and I had to go to fetch her home. It was about fifty kilometres from the road. We had to go by ox-cart on foot through the green forest. I liked to see various kinds of trees and the plants near by the mountains, it just full of many kinds of ferns and watched those villagers's children, their eyes were so innocent. I got much experience out of that trip.

My sister had a friend who lived close by at an American Christian Pastor's house. I had been thinking about learning English all the time and kept saying so to my sister. My oldest sister said I should learn Chinese which would be useful to my job, but my father did not approve, he said it was useful all right but you had to learn more than ten years before you could use it in writing and reading, English was better, he added. So my sister asked her friend if the Pastor's wife had time and would like to teach English. When we got words from her that she did not mind, we went to study together. She could talk Thai so she talked Thai to us all the times. And the book that she used to teach us was the Bible. She kept talking just about God and Jesus and the miracles that He did. Well, I did not see that all those miracles He had done were any better than those miracles of the spirits which I had read about since I was a child or those of the spirits which some of the villages believed in. After she had told us all of Jesus and God, tried hard to persuade us to be Christians to which we listened with disinterest, she threw out her last card by emphasizing that "All the people who don't believe in God and Jesus the Redeemer will be sent to the deep hot hell." I came home with an agitated and rather frightened mind. I told father all about what she had said. Father popped his eyes with great surprise and said, "Why, I had thought that white people were clever. Who can help you out of hell if you do just bad things. And who can draw you to hell if you do just good and proper things. I don't believe that Jesus would say so. It sounds like dictatorship to me, may be it's the pastor's wife who made that expression up. Why don't you ask her what Jesus told the people to do?" Next time I went to see her I came back to tell father that,<sup>s</sup> "She said, Jesus said, God said, don't steal, don't lie, don't kill man, don't have any things that will make you drunk, don't make love to other people's wives or husbands, don't mention other god's name in front of Him, honour your parents, don't worship any idol except Him because He is the only true God, don't have doubts at what He said, don't covet your neighbour's house, don't be fault witness, don't say His name in vain, don't find reason in what He said, and be the good sheep for Him to lead because one who follows His track will never be in danger. And he said don't be angry



easily, if some one slaps your right cheek turn your left cheek for them to slap it again. And love your neighbour like you love yourself, and God will give every thing to the one who has faith in Him, but He will help just the one who help themselves." Father said, "that was not bad, but you might want to know what Buddha said." He said, don't steal, don't lie, don't kill, don't have any thing that will make you drunk, don't make love to other people's wives or husbands. And if you are going to do or to say anything, think it over first so that if the other people do or say the same thing to you, you will approve or you will like it or not. If you like it, all right go ahead say or do it. If you think, no you won't like it, then stop your statement or your action, and avoid every thing that will lead you into a quarrel but if you can't avoid it you must bear the consequences bravely and calmly. And every body has to be sad or suffer for one thing or other, we are the same all over the world so be kind, be sympathetic to every body, don't be jealous, be glad when others get better than you. And you must train your heart to be neutral. The one whom you can and you must depend on is yourself. And for the believing, one day when Buddha was going to preach in Kalama, the people there asked him "You see, our town is near by the high way so there are many preachers who come to preach to us, one said this, the other said that. What will we do? What should we believe?" Buddha said, "Oh yes, it is natural for you to be confused and doubtful, the belief that you don't approve it by yourself should not be in your mind. You should not decide to believe it because of these causes:

- Because you have heard it is so.
- Because it is the traditions, or old saying.
- Because it is spoken by many people.
- Because it is in the books.
- Because you guess it should be so.
- Because of your assumption.
- Because you anticipate that it should be so.
- Because it was the same as what you have believed before.
- Because the speaker is the one you should trust.
- Because this speaker, this preacher, is your teacher.

When you have thought carefully and are sure yourself that this preaching is good, this preaching has no bad effect on the one who does it, if you do it, noble people will admire you, if you do it completely it will be good, it will be happiness for yourself and for other people. There, then you should believe it."

She persuaded us to go to her church every Sunday. The Thai preachers who had preached there were all stupid, they said something that, by looking at their faces we could see clearly that they did not even understand what they said themselves. When they prayed, they did like this, "Oh Father, you are the only God, the only Almighty, the only Light of the world, the only Good Shepherd, be kind to us sinful people, give me this and that and these and those, and oh, Father, give us this and that and these and those. And thank you for your kindness that you have given us this and that and these and those. We'll be good sheep for you to lead. And there are so many hard headed people who don't believe in you, forgive them and don't throw them in hell yet, give them a chance, be kind to them by inspiring them to believe that you are the only God, Amen." Oh dear me! if there is God I was sure that He would be bored to death with these flatterers who praised Him because they wanted to beg and beg and beg for many things from Him. a

And what was the use any way to beg things from Him. He had already said He would help only the ones who help themselves. But their music, even though it was full of praise for God and Jesus, was really something. I could not remember how long I studied the Bible (it should be English but it was not) with her. I just remembered that my patience came to the end one day, then I left.

My brother graduated and he was top in the surgery course, so he was chosen to be a house surgeon. This was a good chance for me to have my arm repaired. While I was admitted in the hospital, I learnt many new and funny things around me. Before I had thought that to be a doctor was something you had to sacrifice your life for it. But now I felt rather disappointed when I found out that it was one of occupations only.

One day shortly after I was operated, I started up from a dozing and a little frightened when I heard some one talking to the patients with a loud and abrupt voice as if a general in the fighting field at the frontier was giving orders to the soldiers. He was a doctor and was making round the patients. It amused me very much when my brother told me later that that doctor was a son of a high ranking policeman.

A maid in the hospital earned special money by washing the patients' personal clothes. One day the nurse supervisor found that out, she came straight to her and said with very strong stress, "You must not do your personal job in working time, understand? If I find out that you do it again, you'll see what will happen to you." And she walked away for a while and then she came back. "Have you finished cleaning this room yet? Why are you so slow? Never mind, leave it there for a moment. You know where my house is, don't you? Good, go and bring me the package from my mother."

When I was better I could go to stay out of the hospital. I went to stay with a family near by there. And here I saw a gossip circle, which made me almost die laughing. Mrs. B and C were neighbours of Mrs. A. One day Mrs. B came to visit Mrs. A, and they chatted gossip about Mrs. C. Next day Mrs. C came to visit Mrs. A and chatted about Mrs. B. The next day Mrs. B and C had met each other on the way to the market. They exchanged what Mrs. A gossiped about them. It was rather serious, they both rushed to Mrs. A's house. First, started with, "Why did you say so and so?" "No, I didn't, you misunderstood," and then the three of them talked all at once. The more they talked the hotter they got, and louder and louder they became, nobody listened to anybody else. Oh my goodness, it was just as if someone had put a loud speaker under fighting sparrows.

When I came back home a friend persuaded me to go to study English with an American doctor's wife of another Christian Mission. I had to keep asking my friend many times, "I don't mind to pay an expensive fee for it but are you sure that she won't teach us just about the miracles of God?" I was afraid that if I had to listen to any of it once more I would scream out loud. She assured me that this doctor's wife would not do so. So I went to join in her class. She had never taught before so all she could do was to tell us how to read and talked to us some, that was better than having no chance to study at all. I had studied grammar at school already so I could get along all right. We studied three times a week for almost a year. We were able to talk a little when that friend of mine thought about going to study bookkeeping in Bangkok.



My brother had graduated, father had not to support him anymore so he could help himself. I knew from the start that I did not like the hair dressing business, I might as well go along to study bookkeeping with my friend. But I had no money at all. Father could not support me from the small income he got. And brother got a scholarship to go to study medicine in the States, so he could not help me. My friend's parents could not support her either. One day we discussed this matter with that American doctor's wife. She suggested us to go to work part time in the hospital of her mission. We went down to Bangkok together. My friend could talk Chinese, so she got the translation job. I got the job of night telephone operator, oh, what mosquitoes.

There were many, many students in the bookkeeping school. Just in our class there were about eighty persons. The teacher taught very fast but well, he never repeated what he had taught. If any student did not understand and asked he would say, "Don't stop the other people's progress by your dullness," and told them to ask the students who understood it in private time. At the end of the hour he would give us a lot of home work and told us to write down in detail which item had to enter on which side of the books. I thought that he had taught us the rules how to separate them, the next he should let us try to use our own head because when we went to work as a bookkeeper he would not follow us there to tell us how to do them. So when he told us all to write down I did not do it, I sat in the front row so he saw that I disobeyed him which irritated him very much. He said, "There is one student in this class who is stupid but vain." "Say whatever you like, boy, I am not going to note it down," I said to myself.

With what we studied we could take the examination of the London Institute of Bookkeepers. But the teacher had the right to choose the students to apply for the examination. At the end of the six months term in the preliminary class the teacher did not let me and a few students apply for the examination. He said, "The students whom I do not let take the examination are the stupid ones whom I think it would just waste their money and time to study this subject because they never can pass." What a man he was, he never cared or thought of the others' feeling at all.

In the second term we studied the intermediate course. And at the end of the year I applied for both the preliminary and intermediate course and another one from the London Chamber of Commerce which was very difficult, there were just a few who could pass. The teacher hesitated to let me apply, he said, "It will waste your money you know." "But I have money, you see," I said. Therefore he let me apply. I could pass all that I applied for. When I went to get my certificates he forced out his first smile to me.

After I had my certificates I intended to study in the higher class. But my sister was going to marry. If I did not go home nobody would take care of our shop and especially our old father. So I had to go home. I could not bear the hair dressing job anymore. I decided to change it to be something else. I borrowed my father's friend's money to install a retail shop. And for this I felt very grateful to my brother that he had taught me to do things alone. If I was raised up like any other Thai girl, this business could not have been possible.

But the sad thing to see in our house's yard after I came back home was all the flower plants died. My sister had no heart for them at all. It took me a long time to look for and plant them again.

Shortly after I had installed my shop the director of the hospital in Bangkok where I had worked before had heard that I had passed the bookkeeping examination, asked me to keep the books for their clinic in our town as a part time job. I accepted the job and had a chance to study English with the new doctor's wife for three times a week. She talked a lot more than our former teacher, which was good for me too that I could practise listening English. After my ears were completely flooded by her talk a year later I stopped learning.

It was impossible for me to keep the shop and to do the house work at the same time. I had to hire a servant to do it for me. I knew how to do it well but it took me quite a long time to find out how to make the servant do it for me without watching and telling her all the time. And I very much appreciated to my father's poverty between and after the war. By seeing those brothers and sisters who were born and grew up when father and mother were rich. They were all spoiled. They did not know any thing about keeping the house and did not appreciate the value of money at all. My oldest brother always spent the money which he thought he would get them next month. The seventh sister who was born and grew up when there were five servants in the house, she would be helpless if I were not at home now; the dust would cover the house up to her throat, she did not even know how to wash clothes, and we had to have new servants every now and then because they could not bear the way she talked to them. If father was always as rich as before, I would be desperately helpless as the others. It was good to have somebody who knew how to work in a house.

Because I worked with the mission, they said they did not force anybody, but kept asking, inviting and persuading me to go to their church, and I did not want to be antisocial, so it was necessary for me to go to their church. The preachers here were a little bit wiser than at the other mission because they were more educated, but still stupid enough to raise themselves up by stepping on other people's hand. They blamed, and were sarcastic about other religions without really knowing those religions and then praised themselves highly. I was bored to death. One day the head of their preachers preached to us how silly my religion was. Well, I was not a religious person, actually at that time I did not know much about my own religion more than what father had told me. My time was not so precious as gold, but it seemed nonsense to spend half a day in sitting and listening to such abusing. I had read from some Indian history that one king had two sons, and by custom he should give the throne to the first son after he had died; but he did not want the bad or stupid one to be a king, so before he died he called his two sons in and gave them each a sheet of paper with two equal lines on it, and told them to make one line shorter without erasing it. The first son could not do it but the second son could do it easily by drawing the other line longer. So the king gave the throne to him. I knew as well that they would fire any worker who showed even a little that their religion was unbelievable. But my job was only a part time job so I did not care much if they would fire me. I would not starve to death if I did not work with them. So I could not come to church anymore, if they would let me work for them I would be glad to, if they did not want me it would be all right for me. Fortunately, they could not find another worker to take my place; so I did not lose my job. Here I tried to read some of their Bible, it was not much different from the other Missions, except one Mission has sabbath on Sunday and can eat every kind of food, the other have sabbath on Saturday and can not eat porks, duck



and no scale fish. But both were translated word for word which must require special patience to read and understand it, And I had not much of that patience. Some of the members of their church were, as I had noticed and heard from the gossip between themselves and other people who knew them before, misfits from general society. I mean they had done something that people thought was bad or wicked to do, our town is small that almost every body knows each other and what they have done, so the people did not accept them, or I might say it the other way, they dared not go to those groups any more. When the American Pastor who naturally knew nothing about them but wanted more and more members for their church, even though these people were Buddhists before but they knew just a little about it, so the Pastor could persuade and attract them by money or by helping, to be members easily. (This is just in my own town, I knew nothing about the other towns, which might be different.) This was very useful to us because some of them if they had no place to go would be a nuisance and some of them might even be harmful to society. But when they came together and had rules of their own they could walk with their backs straightened up and dared not do mischief any more. And these missions had introduced us to know many useful things for our country in the past so we appreciate their services.

Because as I had said there were just a few authors whose works I could read, and by now I knew a little English and my brother encouraged me too, so I started to read some easy English books and later a friend of mine in Bangkok who liked to buy and collect good English books (but she had no time to read them) lent me some. I could not understand them all though, there were many words I did not know, but after I had read for quite a while I could guess. After I had finished each book I wrote to her about it, she liked that so she sent me one after another, which I appreciated very much because in my town there were no English books for sale.

The United States Information Service came to give their services in our town. They had a library too, but it was full of books that I was not interested in, and it was flooded with books against Communism. And they had a programme which they called "psychological warfare" which was translated into Thai in words which amused me very much. It sounded as if the business had to deal with the mental hospital. I was curious how they did this programme. The worker in there told me that they had to go to every village to give the people lectures and films against Communism. I wondered what the lectures would sound like, would the villagers who never or rarely come out of their villages and were educated little understand these new long words in the lectures? I would very much like to have gone to listen to one that was given in a remote village but did not have a chance. One day my brother came to visit us. I told him of my curiosity and my wish, he said, "Oh, don't you worry that the villagers won't understand, they are far more clever than you think. I was asked to translate the lecture of an U.S.I.S. officer one time to the villagers in a village in Nongkai, from their looks you could see clearly that they were saying to themselves that this business was silly nonsense."

"If you could see that, why, that American officer could see that also, but why did they spend a lot of money to do it then?" I asked.

He replied mockingly that, "Well, who knows? May be they have too much money and don't know what to do with it."

No, from what I knew of the Americans personally and from the books I had read about them they were not that kind of people.

One day I went to look for some books to read in the USIS library. I overheard a worker chatting to another that today when he walked past the director's desk, he covered the paper he was writing quickly. It was funny because even if he did not cover it, he could not read it any way because it was written in a secret code.

And the other day they had a lecture by the director there for which he had to draw a map on the blackboard. He drew it quickly and correctly as an experienced person could do. I whispered to myself softly, "What are these people doing in our country? If they come to give us information as they have said why do they have to write their reports or what ever they called it in a secret code? Can it be that they use this service as the curtain in front of them to spy on our country? But what would they do that for? We can see clearly that they do not want any colonies. They give us help because they have quarrelled with Russia and want us to be on their side, that's all. Can it be that they are afraid that one day we may change our mind and be on their rival's side, so they invented "Psychological warfare" to tour round every village to make a complete map of our country? Well, whatever you do, you must think it over carefully, we are very poor of course, but that does not mean we are stupid." Even the small red ant could kill the elephant, this was the summary of a tale of my father, telling us when we were young.

Lately they rather interfered in our business, like a guest coming to one's house, discontented in what the host did, then told him what he should do and what he should not. Why did they not stay at home and let us use our heads what to do and which side we should be. Instead of running out to other people's houses and giving us help and if we did anything that did not please them, they would say we had no gratitude. Any one who knows Thai people who are Buddhists well, would know how much that comment hurt their feelings. I remembered that when I was a child, I used to quarrel with my sister about the giving business. "You see yesterday when I had candy I have you half but today you have it you don't give me any. Remember, next time you'll get nothing from me." Grandmother heard that, she called us both to sit in front of her and said, "Listen, darlings, when you give things to people you must not remember it. But you must remember when you have got things from people and must try hard to return their kindness. Buddha said that the noble man was happy when he had the chance of giving, just rascals or bad persons who were happy to get things from other people and then forget about it. You don't want to be bad persons, do you?" Almost every Thai person was bred that way.

One day I had a chance to talk about this matter with an American doctor. I asked him, "Why don't you leave us alone and let's do what we think is good for us?"

He said, "Why doesn't Russia do that then. Don't you see that it was Russia who went in to interfere with other countries first. If Russia stopped, we would stop too."

It reminded me of when I was a child, if I fought with my sister we both grabbed each other's hair and pulled, mind, it hurt, I had to yell out, "Stop pulling my hair." My sister would yell back, "You stop first," but we did not stop until we both were tired out to death and then we would walk away in different directions from each other.

When will these two countries be tired?

When my brother came back from the States he was moved to work in the town where the electricity could not suit his record player. So he had to leave it and all the records with me. Some were popular songs, some were classical music. When I first listened to all those records I liked a few of those popular songs but of those classical songs, I said, "How can they call these songs as music? This instrument played it this way, the others played it that way, it seemed like all these musicians don't know how to play and then they come to play together, you can't even hum to it."

My brother said, "You must listen to it many times before you can understand it. And when you understand it, you'll like it, try and see." So I tried, and yes, the more times I listened to it the more I liked it. Every time I listened I had noticed some new sound which I had never noticed before and were very pleasant to my ears. This part made me feel joyful, that part made me feel lonely and so on. Finally I just loved it. But this kind of music could not be listened with pleasure if there was anyone talking or making any noise in the room. That was the difference between popular and classic song I think, for the popular songs, the more companies to hum along with it, the more fun it would be, it could intrude in to your ears whatever you were talking or doing.

I had the chance to go to many places with my brother and his friends, his educated friends I should say because they had graduated from the University. Now I could gather together my broken heart of having no chance to study in the university. Before I was always sorry that I had bad luck that I finished the school when father could not afford for my higher education. (And if I had had that chance what I was going to study I really did not know at that time.) And I was more sorry when I saw the three sons of my rich neighbour went to study and they had to come back one by one, to be good for nothing. They could not study at the university because they could not make the marks which the students had to make at least so and so, therefore they were sent away by the university. And it was not that they were stupid but it was because they had to be busy spending money that their parents gave them. Why, if that money was yours, father, I would bring grace to you, I always thought. And by listening to a few of my brother's friends talk. I was not sorry any more. The way they, the highly educated ones talked, some of the friends in the far village I knew while I went with my oldest sister could talk much, much better. I mean, more sense than that. And some of them talked about the pride that they have got from the university, it was not the knowledge that they were proud of but it was the time, the five or six hours a day and four or six years in it, the big pretty building, the certain kinds of trees that they had to pass under when they went in there, the fence, that they were proud of. Why, if it was so, the caretakers, the gardeners of the university could have as much pride, if not more, because they stayed there longer. Yes, surely there were many, many good and brilliant ones who had graduated from the university, (of course one is my brother) but who knows that if I had graduated I will not be one of those proud people.

One year after my brother came back from the States he wrote to us from where he was working that he would like to be ordained to be a monk as our Thai custom is. We were all surprised and glad especially



father and mother because actually he should have been ordained when he was twenty or twenty one years of age, but he had to study all that time, and the old folks did not expect that he would want to be ordained at this age. There were many things we had to do for him in this ceremony, but we were willing and glad to do it.

After three months he came out of the temple and went to see some of his friends in Bangkok. I had some business to do for my shop there, too, so we went together. On the way I asked him about what he thought about the ordaining and what he had studied in the temple. He said to be a good monk was hard because Buddha gave us rules, many hard rules to do but he did not force any body to do it. So the first thing the new monk had to do was to force himself to do, to control himself to be in those rules. The first week was awful for him because he had to omit dinner and had to sit on the floor when all his life he had never sat on before, (He had never been with grandmother, unfortunate boy!) and had to wake up at four o'clock to recite the lessons, and at six o'clock had to walk bare foot (on the red sharp rocks roads of our town) round about the town to receive the food from the people who wanted to give food to the monks but had no time to go to the temple. After he got used to all that he could get along all right and finally after he had studied what Buddha preached he liked it very much and felt that three months was not enough because he could learn just the principles. At least it must take two years to study the whole preaching in detail. And then he told me what he had learnt. Happiness ran through my spine when I heard it. Now I understood why Thai parents were so eager, so insisted on having their sons ordained. They said the one who was not ordained was a raw one and the one who had been ordained was a ripe one. Before I did not understand this expression but now I understood it. Before this time I had a very violent temper, for example, if my sister gave papayas or vegetables or flowers that I had planted to her friends without asking my permission. I would run out to the garden with a knife, chop down the papaya tree, or stamp angrily on the beds, or cut down the flower bushes and say, "There, if I have no right to them why should I plant them at all." I had never thought of how it would hurt my sister's feeling. But now I had changed suddenly and thought that how silly I had been in the past. It seemed my mind had calmed down and whatever people did bad to me it did not matter me much. I could laugh easily and felt free. My brother gave me some of books about Buddha and his preaching. It was thrilling to read all those books. I heard somebody say that when they wanted to do something together and did not want to be betrayed by each other they would swear an oath, "Let the one who betrays not encounter, or understand Buddha's preaching in the present life and the life beyond." It had sounded funny to me before. But now if I am not very sure that I can do what I had to give that oath, I will not give them.

The third year of my retail shop, trade was bad and political confusion aggravated it. Fortunately I had paid all my debts since the second year. But the income could rarely cover the expenses. My sister suggested that once I had told her that the USIS wanted a librarian's assistant and they could not get any body at that time, why did I not try whether they still wanted somebody. So I wrote to the director but he did not reply to my letter. And I found out later that they did not want any now. My father saw the situation, so he said he would cover the expenses from now on. He was always nice to me. The hospital where I was working with as a bookkeeper wanted some one to attend in the stock room, but the salary for the full time

job as stock and bookkeeper they offered was a little bit higher than what I had started with at Bangkok as the telephone operator. Why, I work for them so long and do my best and yet they did not count for it at all. I had rather starve than get such a disgraceful salary.

A friend of mine told me that she would like to go to the States very much. And she had a chance to go, too, but surely she had to know English well enough. And I did not study it for so long, so I would like to continue it again also. By that time there was a Canadian teacher who came to play tennis at the club where we both belonged. We talked to him about it, he had no time to teach us but he told us that at the college where he was teaching there was an English teacher who had come to teach English language and he had very much experience in teaching. So his wife took us to see him one day. Good gracious, by that time even though I could not speak much yet I could understand what the American and Canadian talked quite well, but I could not understand a word when this English teacher talked. We were stunned. The Canadian teacher's wife had to relate what he said to us all the time. He talked about flesh (blood and pus) and spirit or something like that, I forgot how the words go together but it meant he had no time to teach because he had to teach the students of that college and in the evening he had to teach the teachers and government officers. If we wanted to join that class it would be all right, but it was rather too full though, he added. But the time that he had class in the evening my friend could not go. So that's what it was. You had learnt English for so long but could not understand a word of what English people said.

By now I became acquainted with quite a few American people. I liked many things about them, I liked their easy-going ways, some of their straight forward manners, their talkativeness. Talking about their eloquence it reminds me of a remark my sister made about my English. One day an American woman came to see me. She was very, very talkative person. She told me about an event in her home town in the States, she talked quickly and fluently and surely in this case I need not say much. So I just said, yes, when she stopped to breathe and, oh no, when the story seemed impossible. The story was quite long when she left my sister said, "Oh, it was fortunate for me that I did not bother to learn English which you had to learn for so long and all that you can say was "yes and no."

But it stupefied me when I heard some of these well educated Americans talk. One of them said that their dollar was big, had great value, who in the world did not want it? Every body asked for it. I always saw that a child of an American rarely wore clothes in the hot day but one day I did not know what was the matter with the mother she scolded her child in front of me, "Do you want to be naked like Thai children?" Oh yes, she was ashamed that a one or two years old child was naked in a temperature of 100°F. But when a grown up woman was almost naked in a bikini bathing suit in 50°F, that was all right, "Her shape is nice, isn't it?" And one time an American boy when he heard our classical music said, "Oh, it seemed as if she is having a headache and groans and is going to die." I did not know what he would think about the opera because they had the same style of singing, may be he had never heard of it.

And it seemed these people did not understand how we loved and how highly we respected our king at all. Let me explain it in an easy way like this. The

most respected persons in all Thai families are the parents. In children's groups the major cause of fighting is calling each other's parents bad names. I remembered that when I was in the fourth year of the primary school I had fought with a friend who was much, much bigger than me because she called my mother bad names and I never talked to her again until we had finished from school. Even a drunken man, if his parents were mentioned in the bad way, he would start up and become sober and the one who mentioned it had to be careful if he did not want any injury. A prostitute stabbed another girl to death and told the police that it was because that girl called her mother a prostitute, "Yes, I am a prostitute but my mother was not, I do not let any body call her by that name."

And all the parents are gathered together in our king and then we put him high up on the highest place in the house. And from there he will watch and take care of us and will not let danger come to us, who have to turn our faces down to work for our own livelihoods. We really have a high respect on our king.

Yes, you were right, you had liberty to say or write or to do as you liked but you wanted us to be your friends, to be on your side, didn't you? It was so funny that their government had to pay a lot of money through these organizations to make us know them and like them but their people did the opposite.

I had never seen the picture "The King and I." but I saw some pictures in a magazine. And by the attitude of the Thai King in those pictures, made my ears burn hot. It was just the pictures, every one knew that so why should Thai people pay much attention to it? And it was through these pictures that people all over the world would know Thailand. Of course they would know and remember the name of our country well because they had to laugh at the queer and wild actions of their king. But the question was where did the man who told the actor to act that way get those manners from? Hope the American people do not act that way in general. No, no, at least the ones who came to our town do not, could it be that he got them from the people near him, such as his parents or relatives or friends? Well, it might be and it might not. His house might be located near the mental hospital and he might have got used to those manners so he told the actor to copy them from himself.

The hospital could not find a worker to take my place so they decided to have me. Here I came to the cross way. I had to think hard and carefully about it. Workers who did not believe in God could not work long with them. If I wanted to get promotion and permanent job I had to believe in God, or at least had to act as if I was going to believe. I really wanted the job. But for God really I had nothing against Him. Whether there was God or there was not did not matter with me. I knew that I could act as if or going to believe as well if I wanted to, and I thought that I could make prayer better than some of their preachers, which I thought I could make it good enough to make them thrill. But doing that in my religion we called deception. They would be glad if I did so even they knew that I did not really believe because most of the workers were that way. But if I did not pretend I would not have any promotion or might be fired out any day that there is some body whom they think they could persuade to believe in God to come to take my place. But how could I look straight into other people's eyes if I knew myself that I was deceiving somebody all the time? I would lose my self confidence then. It was hard for me to decide what to do so I consulted the



matter with my father. He said I better live the honest life and be poor than getting money by deceiving people because it would make you feel bad all the time. I accepted the job and waited for whatever would come to me in the future. I could help in the expenses then but father did not let me, so I could buy some comfortable things for myself. And by this time I had chances to go to some western people's party, which was quite different from what we had in our town.

In our town every social life or parties as the western people would say, has to deal with the monks. If one had good luck, or bad luck, or died or got married or had a house warming, or a season of ordaining which is before Buddhist Lent (the full moon of July), and the season of giving the necessary things to the monks, which has to be between one month after Buddhist Easter (the full moon of October to the full moon of November), and some families have their own season for giving food to the monks for their ancestors' sakes. For all these they would invite the monks to come and have food at home, breakfast or lunch whatever was convenient or according to the certain kind of party. Our social life started here, the monks that they invited might be three, five, seven, nine, fifteen, twenty and so on according to the occasion and the money, but the people who attended, to come to help, to make food or any thing that need to be done in the party might be twenty, fifty, one hundred and so on accordingly. And the way of inviting people to the party, if it was the big party in the old day they had a few music instruments play loudly in front of the house, the small party just sent some one to go round and tell each family they wanted them to come. And from those families, they had to come as many persons as possible, but at least one, if father or mother could not come they had to send some one in the family to be deputy, and gave some money (not much) to the host or hostess. Here the community was divided into many groups, the old people's group, the men's group, the women's group, the children's group, and the servant's group.

The old people's group had to do with ceremonies and customs and told the others what to do, the old women made the candles and prepared and arranged the betel nuts and cigarettes (which was an easy and light job) for the monks and the guests. And mostly these people talked about what they did or did not in the old time and the temples and religion's business, "The church in the South Temple needs repairs," "Next Holy day Maha Worn (a monk) will preach, last time he preached about....." and the behavior of their offsprings, "You know my son-in-law went to work in Bangkok and he is so nice, he sends some money to me every month."

The men's group's duty was to arrange where the monks would sit, spread out the mats, put down a square carpet for each monk to sit on and pretty pillows at the back of each seat (just for show I think, I have never seen any monk lean on it) and to place the water bottles and glasses and pots for receiving the water with which the monks washed their hands and spit the betel nut after chewing for a while to every seat. And took the food trays to give to the monks and took them out when the monks had finished. Mostly they talked just about politics, and some times about their occupations. "You know what the Lord Mayor said in the assembly yesterday?" "From now on every litre of gasoline we use we have to pay tax too, isn't it terrible?" "What do you want your son to study after he has finished at high school?" "Lately did you see some Americans in green uniform about five or six of them, come to measure up some of the streets?" "I wonder what is up now? The other

day a boy from up country told me that they went to measure the fields, the woods, the streams around his village too. I don't know "our wicked government is doing? It made me irritated you know to see the other people come and do some things as if the place has no owner." "Calm down, calm down, may be it's one of their helping projects." "If so there should be some Thai Authorities to come along with them, don't you think?" And the teen-age boys in this group had to be the errand boys.

This was the school of cooking and decorating flowers for all the young girls. Each dish that they made on this occasion had to be done by an expert. The young girls were sent to help these experts and always they had more helpers than they needed. Some of this women's group was divided up to do the arranging of flowers, some times they used fresh flowers, some times they used both fresh and artificial flowers. The young girls who were interested in decorating things with flowers came to help them. Of course if any one "wanted to know the gossiping about any body in town came to this group. "I told her many times that she should keep an eye on her daughter, but she did not pay attention to me. Put some salt in there a little bit girl, there is it, remember, every food that you make with cocoanut milk you must "put" a little salt in, it will make it taste better. If she lets this happen on and on, who will be the one that is sorry if some ashame "thing happen, but her "ownself. Hey, take that pot down quick, it's too thick now. Couldn't blame any body if she has to take care of the fatherless baby some day. I always told her....." The centre of all kind of news was here.

The children "group had to go to play apart from where they worked but had to be in the mothers' eye sight. Normally they did not intend to play much because they had to keep an eye on the women's group also to see if the candy was finished yet. So they talked odds and ends to pass the time". "Yesterday I saw a dead chicken in the back lane so I took it home and planted it." "Don't be silly, Dang, you can't plant a chicken. It will be rotten," the older one said. "Why not, the other day my aunt planted a mango. She told me that in seven or eight days it will grow and in four or five years we will have a lot of mangoes to eat. I did the same way she "had done so in five years (don't know the meaning of "year" is) if you are nice to me I'll give you one of my chickens." "No, you can't." "Yes" "No" "Yes".....

The servants had to do hard jobs, to carry water, wash dishes and pots and pans, carry charcoal and heavy pots up or down from the stoves. And clear up things when the party had finished. Generally they talked about their bosses, if one started "My boss is good," the others' bosses would be better. If one started "My boss is bad," the others' bosses would be worse." If one wanted to know what was going on in the other's house, came to ask from these servants.

The host or hostess had not to "do any thing. They just sat in front of the house to welcome the guests and receiving the money that they brought along to help, and giving all the supplies that they needed. The rest was finished by all the guests.

If we gave breakfast to the monks, it had to be served to them about 7 o'clock (in this case the guests had to come at 5 o'clock) and lunch at 11 o'clock. After the monks had finished with the food and blessed us in Pali verse which was not long, all the guests could have food; after that

they help to clear up a bit and gave the rest to the servants and then the party was over.

In the case that we had a big party such as giving things to monks or ordaining sons, we needed a lot of help to do things and to carry things to the temple. It wasted time to go to tell everybody so we hired a band in which there was a big drum and a few horns to play in front of the house. That would call who heard the music to come and help. It was exactly so when I was young but not now. Now some of the rich people still do it but they have to distribute the invitation cards because there are many people who have just come to settle in our town and those government officers who would not come if we did not give them cards and when you give a card to one person you have to give to all. So now the playing of music has just become a part of the custom, which can be done only by the rich ones because it cost quite high and there are many foreigners (especially those high Pastors) who misunderstand us. They thought that when we gave things we wanted to show off to other people. But if they knew that almost every body in our town knew each other well since great, great grandparents they would not say so. And one good thing that we got from this music was while we worked or walked from home to the temple which sometimes was quite far, we were not so tired and every body felt gay.

In the case that we wanted to chat to our friends sometimes, normally we went out at night after dinner (because every one had nothing to do by this time) to the friend's house. We needed not tell them before hand. If that friend was not in (because she had gone to chat with another friend) we might as well go to the other house. But an American told me that their custom was different. They could not go to any body's house without an invitation, friends or not friends were the same. In the place that telephone could not be used in general like our town I rather thought it was too much trouble to give out the invitations now and then, and then to wait for their invitations.

At western people's parties everything is finished before the guests come. There were seats ready for them to sit on, and they were all mixed up, men, women, old and young. So they had to talk in general of things which everyone could talk of which were not interesting at all for either the speaker or listener, therefore the conversation could not go long. And then they had food, after that they played games which made every body have fun and perspire.

The difference between these two parties is the Thai party (I should say our town party), the people had fun in talking, they really enjoyed it because they divided themselves into the same interesting subject groups. And they had a chance to learn new things and new news. But the western people's party had fun in playing games which made them warm which was very natural for their cold countries. Well, they could have fun in talking too if the ones who had the same interests went to sit together and if the other people would not come to drag them out to play games before they could finish the sentence they were speaking.

The party that the government officials gave, and the wedding parties in the evening we have copied from the west. The men had to wear suits, the women had to dress up nicely with new dresses. How could we come to sit together when we could not talk about the same subjects. And the new style



dresses made the women feel unfamiliar in them and they were not sure that they would like nice on them or look awful, and some of them were rather tight dresses (to make them look better, they think). So each one had to sit stiffly and cling to and talk to the friends who went along to the party together, and how could they play games anyway when the perspiration ran rapidly inside those suits and with those high heel shoes. So the party broke up quickly. Every one went home getting nothing. I had gone to this kind of party a few times and after that I refused all the ones that I could. I could not see any sense to spend money to make a new dress, and go and sit on one chair and stare vaguely in the open air, listen to the ear-splitting music, and listen and clap the hands at the complicated praises of the host and then go home. The friends who needed a companion to go to such parties always blamed me that it was because I did not want to pay for a new dress. "You are stingy," they would say. Well, maybe you were right, but say whatever you like, I could make a dress for myself, I would spend less money than you if I go. "You are antisocial, if you go you will have a chance to talk to people," she would urge. "And that people are you, why, if I wanted to talk with you I can go to your house at anytime, can't I?"

I had heard that most of the women's dresses were designed by men. I thought that the men who designed some of them must hate the women for one reason or another. So he took revenge on the women by causing us to suffer by wearing those hobble narrow skirts and those very high heels shoes and those deep neckline dresses. If you are not a woman you would not know how uncomfortable we are when we have to use these things I have mentioned. Yes, you have fulfilled your intention, whatever you have produced out of your revengeful head we have to use them. For you to say we are up to date.

I saw my brother played bridge with his friends, sometimes in Bangkok. I asked him to teach me but he said he did not play well enough to teach. So when my Canadian friend mentioned one day that he could play well and did not mind to teach me how to play, I was so anxious to learn it. But his wife was not at home, according to Thai custom women can not go to man's house whose wife is not present. So every time I went to learn I had to ask a friend to accompany me. He was a good teacher indeed, the first time he explained I understood it thoroughly but my friend did not like it. So next time I had to get another friend to go along with me. Therefore we had to repeat the same lesson again, this friend did not like it, either. Oh dear, if I really had to learn till I know how to play bridge well I would have to live a hundred years so that I could go on to the second lesson and another hundred years for the next lesson. There were a few of our customs that I thought were absurd and out of date, that I broke them. But this one I thought it was very good I had to and I would keep it. Well, you would not die if you did not know how to play bridge. So I stopped learning.

One time my friend sent me three books with a Pastor of the Mission I worked with. There were one of Charles Dickens, one of Somerset Maugham and one of John Steinbeck. That Pastor was anxious to know what those books were. When he found out he told me that I should not read novels, because they led you into bad things. I said why, you could learn many good things out of them too. He said yes, but it was as if you wanted

a water lily in the middle of a muddy pond. You would get the lily all right but your hands and legs would get all dirty with mud. And the most important thing was, it was God's prohibition. What he had said gave me a thought.

I thought that in ancient times when science was not known, when the people suffered through sudden sickness or chronic illnesses or were hurt by dangers of nature. They did not know how and why it took place and happened. So it was natural and easy for them to say that those things that happened came from the power that they did not know about and could not see. And gradually that power was called the spirits and the gods. And in some history books I had read, the people in Jesus's period were generally bad, there were many gods for them to believe in." Could it be that Jesus was a human being like the others? But he had a kind heart and a good will toward the people, and it would be hard for him to preach if there were many gods, so he made people believe and had faith in one God. That would be much easier to handle. And like the good mothers in remote villages who did not like their children to go out of the house at night for fear lest poisonous snakes would harm them. If she said, "Don't go because there might be some snakes on the way." And if the children retorted, "How can you know that there will be snakes. There might be and there might not be." It would be hard for her to explain and take times then. So if she made it short by saying, "Don't go; all the spirits wander at night, if you don't believe mother the spirits will drag you to where they live and you'll not see mother again." Then the children would shrink back quickly. So the children whom she scared dared not walk out of the way that she had laid for them, it would be safe all right. But the good mother forgot that these children would grow up and could take care of themselves some day.

Buddha was different, he said from the start that he was a human being and all of his preachings came from his own thoughts. He found those truths by himself. "If you think it over and over that it is good, believe it (his preaching but not himself), if you think it is not good, don't believe it." He treated people as if they had heads of their own.

And the job of the preachers of these two religions are different too, the main and important duty of those Pastors is to try hard to make the people have faith and believe that there is God who creates every thing first. And after the people have believed that already they will tell the people what did God tell them to do. I always look back with awe that if that Pastor's wife told me from the start what did God tell the people to do instead of throwing those miracles on me, which at that time I thought it was a shame lie, by now I might be a Christian because God's preaching is not bad, and that time I knew just a little about my own religion.

The main and important duty of our monks is to advise the people how to make yourself and other people feel happy in living together in this world.

Time passed on, my friend told me that one of that English teacher's students said if you wanted to study with him, you had to apply for the examination he would call you to study afterwards. And if you could pass you would get a certificate out of it. If I wanted to study English I wished to know English well enough to read books, that was all, but if I could get a certificate out of it, it would be nice to have more security because I was not sure about my present job, they might get some one to take my place at any time. So my friend and I went to apply for the examination together.

About one month later, the teacher came to call us to go to study. It was three weeks before the examination took place, the class was three hours a week so it was quite a short time, but we did not hope to pass the examination in the first time, so it was all right. The class room was decorated nicely. I liked the way of decorating those stamps and coins and flowers very much. When we sat down the teacher distributed to us the papers. I was stunned. I found that if I let the light come in on the left side when I read or write I could see it better so I arrange the light accordingly. But the light in this room came from the right side. I could hardly read and it hurts my eyes so much. It took me quite a long time to get used to it. In the first hour I could not catch some words that he said even though he spoke slowly, but still I knew that he was a real good teacher. The second hour he told me to pronounce the word "A" which I thought I could imitate exactly as he had pronounced it. But she said it was wrong, and told me to do it again. Really I did not see the difference at that time. When he saw that I could not do it he looked at me with eyes that reminded me of when I was a small girl and I was playing with my sister. I broke one of her clay pots. She dared not spank me because grandmother forbade her so she looked at me with eyes which made me sob out loud. Grandmother came to ask what was the matter. I told her, "She scolded me, grandmother." My sister cried out, "What in the world, I didn't say a word." "Oh yes, you didn't say it out loud but you said it in your mind." They all laughed at me. And that expression became a subject of teasing me for a long time. The next week he came to this "A" again, this time I had caught it. And now I had noticed the difference in pronunciation between the American and English language too. At the end of some words and some sentences the English twisted them down in an artful way, and make more spaces in the mouth when they were speaking. It sounded nice to the ears. I wrote to my brother about it, he said he liked American better. Well, I understood American better though.

My friend and I had never expected that we would pass the examination. But I had read the "Doctor in the House" by Richard Gordon, who said that when you took an examination you need not worry because the examiner could not possibly look at every paper, what he did was, to throw away all the papers down the stair case, the ones that fell down the stairs were the ones that failed, the ones that stayed up stairs were the ones that passed. The author was just joking of course. But fortunately my paper was one among those that stayed up stairs. The more I studied with this teacher the more I liked his teaching. The way he taught and repeated things even the biggest dumb bell could learn English if they tried to help themselves a bit. It was rather slow though but effective. So my English improved a lot.

By now I saw quite a few English people. Even though they talk the same language as the American people but their manners and characters were quite different. The Americans walked with free and easy steps but the English walked with neat and careful steps; some of them were too careful and it made them look as if they were walking on a stage. But if grandmother saw their manners, she would be satisfied. The Americans could talk to other people a lot more than the English. But some times the way that some of them talked about their tremendous prosperity reminded me of the very poor teen ager who became rich suddenly. It was very good that they came to stay in our country and knew each other because when they saw us live in huts and without furniture they felt proud of their country. And when we saw the people of such manners lived in such pretty houses, such lovely furnitures



and those convenient things we felt proud of our people and country. But generally I liked them because after knowing each other for a while, we could talk intimately as if we had been acquainted for a long time which could suit the customs of the people in this part of Thailand. "Don't make anybody feel that they are strangers in our house," grandmother would say if I did not speak to some one I did not know before who came to our house. And when I went to those remote villages they treated me just as grandmother had taught me. I just walked past their houses, they would say, "You have travelled a long way, of course, don't you feel tired? Drop in and rest a while, have some cool water and chew some betel nuts before you go on. Is your destination a long way off?" But the English people were different, their manners were perfect and they talked nicely of course but the way they talked even though you knew them for ages, I did not think you could intimate to one. This was my personal opinion, nobody could count on it, because all these I observed out of just a few people of both countries who came to our town. The majority of people in their countries might be different.

Between us, in our country we call every body even people whom we have never seen before as relative, in the first meeting which naturally we do not know each other's name (introduction is not necessary) so we call them, grandfather, grandmother, uncle, aunt, older brother, or older sister, according to their ages, after we know their names we add the names in, and the older call the younger, little one or some other words that mean younger or just their names; and we never call any body by their families names. So we absolutely have no stranger especially in our town. How can one be a stranger though if one who speaks to you calls you as one of her or his relatives.

One thing that every foreigner who came to stay in our town complained of was the loud noise of the neighbour's radio, which I did not like it either. But I remembered that when we first had radios, at that time there were just a few people who could have them. Every time we turned on our radios, our neighbours would say, "Turn it on loud so we can hear it too." So even though it almost split our ears off still we had to make it loud for our neighbours' sakes. And when almost all of our neighbours had radios still each house had a radio. When we were cooking or washing the clothes and we wanted to listen to some programme that we followed for a long time, what should we do if we did not turn it on loud. Every house was like that. So every body became tolerant towards each other. Money can not buy every thing in our town. The neighbours were very precious, if it is not really necessary we would never do or say any thing to hurt our neighbour's feelings. I think in the future if every house could afford to buy radios and put one in the sitting room, one in the bed room, and one in the kitchen we all will turn it down softly automatically.

When I first went to the folk dancing my intention was to know how it looked like. After I heard the music and saw how the dancing teacher danced it I liked it really well. In the whole group the only one who did it properly and beautifully was the teacher. The others were all mixed up, some danced like sickly chickens and some were so clumsy like old elephants, some made it with too important an air. And when we did wrong the teacher would shout up with a loud noise as if we were breaking the world into pieces. I almost choked up to death with laughter when the host yelled at me, "You are not supposed to cover the area." It was great fun to have the chances to laugh at other people and at your own self, and saw the beautiful and graceful and active movements of the dancing teacher, and listened to the joyful music.

and then went home, washed the other people's perspiration off from your arms and went to bed, slept like a dead log.

It was a shocking sight for me to see a young English girl dance rock and roll. It was so wild and sexy. If I knew her well I would sink down on my knees to beg, to entreat her not to do it. It destroyed, it was disgraceful to her own nation's character in my view point. It would be natural for those people who invented it but not for the neatly English people, please. One time my brother told me that while he was walking in a street in Paris, he saw a woman there who had dyed her hair green. Well, well, how do you know that in some years in the future these people won't dye their hair bright red, bright green, bright blue and then paint their cheeks and lips and nails black, and then dance rock and roll in a bikini bathing suit to the very hot (enough to burn one's head off) jazz music.

I really appreciate the western people coming to our country. We learnt many good and useful things from them. But what I wish with my whole heart is I would like them to learn, to understand us too. And the way to do it is to communicate with as many people as possible or to read our books, and I can assure them that they will find many interesting things in us. And that way they will understand us and will not look down on us as most of them are doing now. When they came to our country what most of them did was to do their duties and learnt a little Thai language, just enough to tell the servants to do what they wanted to do in the house and the drivers to go left or right or straight, if they were doctors they would learn just the sentences that deal with patients such as, "Open your mouth, take a deep breath, is it painful here?" And if they were Pastors, they would learn how to say, "Lord, Almighty, The Glory, The Redeemer, the only Light of the world," and so on in Thai. So their communications were limited to the servants, the drivers and a few people who could talk (mostly a little) English. If these few people failed them, they hated us and looked down on us all. Our language is not hard to study, if they do not try to be too clever and really want to learn they can learn enough to read in six months.

There are just two main differences between these two languages, in English, each word we have to remember which syllable we have to stress, but it has not certain tone at all, each word can speak in many different tones according to the mood of the speaker, and some words have many ways of pronunciation, that way is the way of low class or uneducated people's pronunciation, you have to pronounce it this way so the people will know that you are high class or educated.

Thai language has intonation marks fix for each word, that educated or uneducated, high or low class, if you know that word or can read it you have to pronounce it exactly the same. The way of speaking it abruptly or politely and the manners that you act along with it that will tell the people what class you come from. Most of the foreigners look over the important of these intonation marks which when they speak Thai it sounds horrible and the listener can hardly understand.

For me whom our language, the verbs do not change according to the time, it is very hard when I speak English. I have to worry and have to think for a long time before I can judge what time it is going to be for the sentence I am going to speak, if that sentence has "yesterday, now, tomorrow or next," it is all right I can choose the right form of verb for

it quicker. But if the sentence has not those words to go with, I am so confused, I can hardly judge what time it is going to be. Why you have to change the form of the verbs anyway when you say yesterday everybody knows it is the past, and now, every body knows it is present, and "tomorrow or next, every body knows it is future. In our language the verbs do not change at all, if we want the listeners to know the time we just add a single word in the sentence, that is all. I think it is much easier than English. But I think the way of thinking about things of all kinds of people is according to the weather and the surrounding, when one does or says about something which you think is absurd if you follow to the real cause you will see there is some reason in it. And if people try to understand each other, all will feel happier, and can be friend to each other easier.

It was a great surprise to us all when we heard about an American boy from a famous university who came to work about some kind of statistics in our country side for one year or so, was coming back from the "States to marry a girl who had just a little educated in the village where he had worked before. My friend who have never had communicated with the people in far villages and thought that those villagers must have been helplessly ignorant said that this boy might have lost his head or something. For me, I have seen some bright even though without education "people in the remote villages, so I thought and believed that this girl must have something that is very good and good enough to touch and soften his heart.

"How can the wife live in the husband's society," my friend said. "Well, even the wild elephants in the forest could be trained to do many useful things. And this is human being you know," I said. "Of course, but they must be trained when they were young not when they were grown up." She did not want to stop the discussion. "Don't you believe that people can do anything in the world because of love." So the argument came to an end.

After they were married I saw them go together a few times, she "did not look bad, but the colour of the skirts and blouses she wore attracted my attention. They were the dizzy pink, nauseated green and headache yellow. I could not see the possibility of that green for the skirt and that pink for the blouse at all. It reminded me of the colours of some of the unnecessary big American automobiles I saw in Bangkok. The down part was one colour, the top part was another colour which I did not think I dare to ride in it, I was afraid "that if the people saw me in such automobile would wonder what kind of the people I was as I was thinking when I saw those colourful automobiles pass by.

Even the dullest girl could captive the brightest boy easily, but the dull boy needed the real bright girl to captive him. I had read this from a magazine, I could not remember who wrote that but it came to my mind when "I saw this couple.

Finally, what I had thought about my job came true. The new one was coming. "The branch that do not join the tree must wither, and then dry. That tree is God, people who do not want to join into God will be dry branches and of course we had to cut off those branches and throw them away. My goodness, I think I am a tree myself all the time, a tiny, tiny little tree of course, but I think it makes me feel better to be a little tree than to be a branch of somebody else. I was not surprised because I prepared myself to see this event at any time, but the way they did and spoke to me when they wanted me



to resign hurt my pride, I should say my vanity. My brother told me from the start that he did not like me to work where the workers had no security even though the salary was higher than the other places. But I told him that I thought the goodness can be good security for me. He said yes in some places but not every place. He was right all the time.

I did not know how my face would look like when I was thinking about all these. I was started up when the teacher asked what I was worrying about. It was not the way of the speaking that cut in me but the flash understanding in the eyes that made me miss my grandmother so much. I became distract. Oh, grandmother I needed you very much, I would like to go to you when I was distressed as I used to go, you would understand what was wrong with me the first minute you saw me, then stroke my head and soothed me with your soft voice, "Don't worry, tell grandmother what was it and grandmother will be on your side." Something cut short in front of me. It was a bicycle trying to turn the corner before me, I turned my scooter down to the sandy side of the road quickly and off balance and fell down quite hard. Fortunately, I did not fall into the deep ditch beside the road, I got just the bruise. It would be nice to go where you had gone to be with you, grandmother, but if I can not go yet but have to stay alive cripple it would be a pity. I must stop thinking of you, on the road at least.